CHOOSERS *CAN* BE BEGGARS:
What 20 Years of Democratic Politics Has Not Changed in Brazil's Urban Slums

A Senior Honors Thesis

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INTRODUCTION & OVERVIEW

Politics is the business of public decision-making, and the process by which we arrive at these decisions and encase them in policy is bargaining. Thus, in its essence, politics is bargaining: different interests meet and disagree, solutions are proposed, concessions are made, favors exchanged, and losers repressed through force or consoled with the promise of future opportunity for change.

The outcome of political bargaining is a function of the resources available to different interests, the social and institutional context that can facilitate or impede their usage, the rules of play, and each interest's ultimate success at strategically wielding resources at the right times and to the right degree so that decision outcomes will bend in their service. This is the case in any political system.

What separates different political systems is simply how political resources are named, distributed, and regulated among the population. While this tends to be justified by grand ideologies – from divine right to the social contract – it is not the ideology but this basic material fact that separates these systems in practice. Monarchies concentrate the bulk of political resources in a hereditary line, which rules by the use of decree and confers titles and resources as a way of rewarding loyalty or assuaging opposition through the monarch's exclusive power of the purse. Oligopolies distribute similar resources to a larger but still exclusive group of the population, while democracies aim to empower the entire citizenry by granting universal suffrage. In all instances, this distribution of resources and the policing of their use is backed by the state's monopoly on the legitimate wielding of force.

We have general assumptions about how this naming, distribution, and regulation of political resources affect the quality of life of people living in those systems. Monarchies tend to

serve the interests of the royal family and its hangers-on at the expense of the citizens, oligopolies often ride on the backs of everyone not in the club, while democracies are thought to eliminate such exploitation and increase the prosperity of everyone, or nearly so. [1] These assumptions hold so long as the actual distribution of political resources matches the basic rubric associated with each system. Our expectations are met, for example, when monarchies really do concentrate most relevant resources in the hands of one family, or when democracies actually succeed in distributing political resources broadly and evenly among the population.

This paper contends that, in the case of democracy, our expectations are frequently unmet because the institution of universal suffrage does not significantly level the political resource playing field. In societies marked by rampant inequality, highly skewed power relations are not radically altered by the introduction of elections and liberal citizenship rights, so that political outcomes are not radically changed.

To illustrate how this may come to pass, this thesis will examine the micro-level case of urban squatter communities in Brazil as a group both highly abused by the authoritarian regime of 1965-1985 and well-placed to reap the benefits of democracy in the following period. Without other resources to bring to bear in the political arena, the average resident of these communities cannot do much with a single vote. In strategic response to their new bargaining position under democracy, squatter communities (*favelas*) began pooling their votes and exchanging them for basic public goods through clientelistic relationships with local political candidates. While moderately successful at reducing evictions and bringing public services into favela neighborhoods, this strategy is inherently precarious, as it does not grant universalistic rights to

[1] Aristotle made the original distinction between monarchy, oligarchy, and democracy as the "rule of one," "rule of the few," and "rule of the people," and provided his own analysis of their good and bad forms in *Politics*, Book III.

these communities and will only continue to benefit them so long as this collective exchange remains feasible.

The rise of organized crime and drug trafficking that swept favelas in the 1980s and 90s has once again crippled the possibility for favelados to pursue their basic interests through the political process. Without the ability to bargain for their own safety through the vote as crime erodes their capacity to act collectively, the quality of life for favelados is again deteriorating. Politicians no longer engage favelas but police them indiscriminately and militarily in order to assuage the fears and concerns of middle- and upper-class city residents. State violence against favelas today is eerily reminiscent of the heavy handed policies of authoritarian regimes. I conclude that, unless democracies expand beyond the vote to alter radically the distribution of political resources – through new institutions, regulations, and representational systems – they will not make significant improvements in the lives of their most underprivileged citizens. No liberal democracy today adequately meets this challenge, be it the new regime in Brazil or the oldest democracy in the world, the United States.

The argument will proceed as follows. Chapter 1 establishes a definition of power as it operates through a democratic bargaining process and reviews scholarship on the ability of democracy to serve the interests of underprivileged citizens. Chapter 2 gives an overview of Brazilian inequality and introduces favelas as a useful case study to identify mechanisms that explain democracy's failures. Chapter 3 applies the bargaining model to favelas under the authoritarian regime and explains the outcomes, while Chapters 4 & 5 do the same for democracy. The conclusion will summarize the findings for Brazilian squatters and reinterpret them through the lens of political power relations, while drawing larger implications for general democratic practice.

CHAPTER 1: DEMOCRACY, POWER, & OUTCOMES in THEORY & EVIDENCE

"No citizen should be rich enough to buy another and none so poor as to be forced to sell himself"
–Rousseau, *The Social Contract*

The third wave of democracy in Latin America sent scholars into orgasms of speculation about the staying power of these new regimes. With inequality in the region registering the greatest of any in the world, the tension between democratic systems and issues of inequality, exploitation, and exclusion quickly came to the forefront. Scholarly investigation of this tension produced publications characterized by a common top-down approach. "Would these democracies be able to consolidate?" scholars wondered, "Would they survive the pressure of the stirring impoverished masses?"[2] If scholarship is to be concerned with addressing real human problems, these perspectives suffer from a confusion of means with ends. Unless it has already been established that a democratic system is the best any citizen can hope for- and I think this remains in doubt- top-down approaches improperly focus on the survival of a system of governance rather than the thriving of its people. Furthermore, years of democratic stability in the region seem to provide sufficient answer to the question of staying power.

This study begins from a related but inverted perspective. Democracy may have survived, but what about its most underprivileged citizens?[3] Where they have not improved, can we count on the democratic system to address their needs in the future? What implications does this historical experience hold for general theories on the interaction of poverty, exclusion, and democracy? To begin this exploration, we must establish a basic theoretical understanding of democracy, what a transition to such a system actually changes in a society, and why. Once a

[2] See, for example, Castañeda (1996), Huntington (1991), Diamond (1999), essays by thirteen scholars in Hagopian & Mainwaring *eds* (2005), and Lamounier (1999). The exception to this trend is Weyland (1999).
[3] By "underprivileged" citizens, I mean those relatively lacking in resources and opportunities at a given starting point. The starting point may be birth, after a transition to a new governing regime, or the beginning of a small bargaining game, for example.

theoretical groundwork is established, the chapter closes with a survey of empirical studies investigating the relative performance of democratic systems over alternatives with respect to the needs of the most underprivileged citizens.

I. WHAT IS DEMOCRACY AND WHAT DOES IT DO?

The general thrust of previous theory

If there is hope for the poor, the marginalized, the discriminated, and the exploited citizen, surely it exists in a democracy. No other system guarantees its people, at minimum, the power to cast a ballot and take part in the hiring and firing of their own political leaders. The best systems have mechanisms that maximize the effectiveness of this tool: unprecedented amounts of information about government activity is released by the media, public debate is allowed on issues, people are free to act collectively and form interest associations, and the competitiveness of elections are enhanced by lowering barriers to entry and exit. They also have avenues for citizens to influence the behavior of politicians once in office. The worst systems fail on some or all of these measures, to the point where their actual status as "democracies" comes under question.

I do not wish to belabor the reader with an overview of democratic theory. It will suffice to assert that, in contrast with other forms of rule like autocracy or oligarchy, *nearly all theorists define democracy as a system which empowers the masses to have a greater say in governance*. As such, it is reasonable to expect democracy will produce outcomes more in line with the interests of the ruled, as long as our particular understanding of democracy falls under this umbrella.

What exactly these outcomes are and *how much* of an improvement they are over other types of regimes is more difficult to pinpoint. Some theorists have located the benefits of democracy in its tendency to foster civic virtue in its participants, regardless of whether they win any policy battles.[4] Others focus on the actual policy wins that are more attainable in democracy than in other systems- redistributive measures, broader and deeper social insurance and assistance, and stronger legal protections, for instance. The first may be classified as *intrinsic* benefits to participants in the democratic process while the second are commonly characterized as *instrumental* benefits that accrue to citizens.

Just as the notion of "civic virtue" has become a rather strange and archaic idea, it is common today to overlook the intrinsic benefits of democracy in favor of examining its outcomes. This thesis, too, is primarily concerned with explaining outcomes, and will be critical of democracy's ability to obtain meaningful ones for many citizens. But in real life and in public debate, the relative worth of democracy must be understood as the sum of both intrinsic and instrumental value added over alternatives.

Democracy defined in the framework of bargaining

I would like to add to the general theoretical attitude above a degree of specificity that defines democracy in the framework of political bargaining. My argument proceeds in 4 points:

(1) *The political process in any system of government is essentially a bargaining process.*

[4] An example: "Among the foremost benefits of free government is that education of the intelligence and of the sentiments which is carried down to the very lowest ranks of the people when they are called to take a part in acts which directly affect the great interests of their country." J.S. Mill in *Considerations on Representative Government*, Chapter VIII.

Human beings living in collectives, and at some point in their development, found it necessary to make group decisions. This is the beginning of politics. While today's large state system requires more complex structures for arriving at public decisions, the political process is in essence the same: it is the process by which we arrive at these public decisions and encase them in policy.

The form this takes in practice is bargaining. From the selection of leaders to struggles over the broad priorities and the minute details of policy, we can describe all as bargaining between interested individuals and groups. These interests meet and disagree, solutions are proposed, concessions are made, favors exchanged, and losers repressed through force or consoled with the promise of future opportunity for change.

This may seem a strange assertion to make about autocratic systems, where a monarch or dictator appears to have absolute control over political outcomes. Such leaders rule by whim and fiat, or so goes the assumption, and do not really have to bargain with anyone. This intuition is false on two accounts: first, we tend to underestimate the constraints that other elites and the masses place on the actual rule of the monarch or dictator, and second, what in fact counts as bargaining is not always as benign and mutually beneficial an exchange as we tend to assume.

The first point has been appreciated in scholarship, to a greater or lesser degree, ever since Machiavelli wrote *The Prince*. As a monarch presented with the trouble of establishing authority over a newly acquired and resistant territory, there are three courses of action available:

> "the first is to ruin them, the next is to reside there in person, the third is to permit them to live under their own laws, drawing a tribute, and establishing within it an oligarchy which will keep it friendly to you. Because such a government, being created by the prince, knows that it cannot stand without his friendship and interest, and does its utmost to support him; and therefore he who would keep a city accustomed to freedom [from the monarch] will hold it more easily by the means of its own citizens than in any other way." (*The Prince*, Chapter V)

In this way Machiavelli recommends a significant input of time and resources into placating unhappy local elites as an effective way of maintaining authority. That this remains necessary

today, though in new settings demanding modified strategies, has been an ongoing topic in scholarship on the politics of the "developing world."[5,6]

The second point is reserved for a later discussion about how power is exercised through the bargaining process, so that many of the mechanisms of autocratic rule (threats of force, for example) can be understood as a type of bargaining between highly unequal parties that is not constrained by countervailing political rights or resources.

(2) *The outcome of political bargaining is a function of resource distribution, the rules and context of play, and the strategic behavior of players.*

This follows logically from assertion one, and is true for any bargaining situation, political or otherwise. The resources available to players in any game are critical to their success; outcomes tend to favor the party with the most weight to throw around, be it the country with the strongest military or the poker player with the greatest number of chips. Of course, the sheer volume of relevant resources held does not pre-determine outcomes.[7] This depends on both the rules and context of play, and each party's ultimate success in the strategic use of their resources to exploit the two in their favor.

Let's take a diplomatic wrangle between two countries as an example: Country A, with a weak military, apprehends a group of suspected spies from Country B within its borders. Country B has the strongest military in the world, and its request to have its agents returned is not immediately fulfilled. Country B wants its agents back, and is inclined to shell A's coast to signal it will not tolerate this type of behavior from the likes of Country A. Incidentally, A has

[5] See O'Donnell (1979) Midigal (1988) and Gandhi & Przeworski (2006)
[6] "Developing world" will remain in quotation marks in recognition of the problems inherent in the distinction. All countries are developing at all times, so the use of the term in reference to a specific set in contrast to "developed countries" is obscenely biased. Unfortunately, a simple and accurate name for those countries typically referred to as "developing" has yet to be articulated.
[7] Keith Dowding (1991) calls this the "vehicle fallacy," which reads one party's power over outcomes directly from the resources that act as its vehicle. However, he offers too limited an explanation of why this is a fallacy.

been trying to negotiate an important trade deal with an ally of B who remains hung up on a minor issue of A's domestic worker protections. This deal is important to A, whose economy is slumping, and it would help immensely if B would encourage its ally to ignore the issue and sign the deal anyway. The spies themselves are of no use to A now, but it would like assurances that B will no longer send agents into A's territory.

The possible outcomes can be listed on a spectrum from the dominance of B's initial preferences (suspected spies are returned and A is chastised with a shelling), A's initial preferences (spies are received with the promise that no more will be sent, the trade deal is signed), and outcomes in between (spies are returned, nothing else occurs). It is clear that B surpasses A in resources, but it is not clear that it will get everything it wants.

First, **rules and regulations** may restrict B's ability to use its resources at full capacity. The waters around A could be designated as an internationally demilitarized zone so that 70% of B's gunships cannot move within range of the coast. Any standing regulation fits in this category. Examples of standing rules in a democracy that affect political bargaining might be limits on campaign soft money contributions, requiring certain information be entered in the public record, term limits, and legal rights and protections for individuals.

Furthermore, the **context** of play can facilitate or impede B's capacity to mobilize its resources effectively. By context I mean the sum of historical factors, institutional interactions, and random events that shape play in any particular bargaining game. It might just so happen that Country B has been getting bad press among its allies for being trigger-happy, so that a shelling would harm its future interests elsewhere. Or the weather in the seas around A may be so bad this time of year that B's guns cannot be fired with the needed accuracy. The uniqueness of these factors to this particular instance of bargaining is what distinguishes them from standing rules

and constraints. Trends in public opinion, for example, are strong contextual factors in democratic bargaining.

After accounting for rules and contextual factors, the final results are determined by each party's success at strategically wielding resources at the right times and to the right degree so that outcomes bend in their favor. Country A may privately scoff at B's demands for the captives' safe return, intending to provoke the launch of B's navy. As B takes the bait, A might offer up the spies at the last minute, make appeals that the world community check this overzealous power, in doing so cause A to lose face, and thereby avoid imminent shelling and perhaps even win future spy-free guarantees from A. In other words, David may beat Goliath at his own game with one well-placed shot.

(3) *Different political systems are distinguished by how political resources are named and distributed among the population, and the standing rules and arrangements that deliberately constrain the use of those resources.*

All governing systems structure the nature of political bargaining by naming, distributing, and regulating political resources.[8] While they do not hold absolute reign over what counts and how as interests duke it out in the political arena, this power is substantial. Heredity was once a key political resource in European countries but is no longer in its most democratized states. However, the potency of wealth as a political resource has existed from time immemorial and is

[8] Robert Dahl defines political resources to include "everything to which a person or a group has access that they can use to influence, directly or indirectly, the conduct of other persons. Varying with time and place, an enormous number of aspects of human society can be converted into political resources: physical force, weapons, money, wealth, goods and services, productive resources, income, status, honor, respect, affection, charisma, prestige, information, knowledge, education, communication, communications media, organizations, position, legal standing, control over doctrine and beliefs, votes, and many others. At one theoretical limit, a political resource might be distributed equally, as with votes in democratic countries. At the other theoretical limit, it might be concentrated in the hands of one person or group. And the possible distributions between equality and total concentration are infinite." (*On Democracy*, 1998:177)

perhaps the most difficult for a governing system to discipline. None has been able to de-politicize its effects completely. At best, it has been subject to stiff regulation in specific states, but even so, there comes a point where rising corruption will begin to erode the benefits of stiffer regulation.

Thus, it is in the naming, distributing, and regulating of political resources that we find the substantive difference between political systems. Autocratic systems structure political bargaining in this way to ensure the rule of one, oligarchy does so for the rule of the few, while democracy (if it is to live up to its name) results in the rule of the people. Ideally, this should be all of them.

Take an absolute monarchy for example. Political resources include the standards: might (control over the military) and money (the power of the public purse). These are primarily distributed along hereditary lines, and by extension, through the discretion of the monarch as a reward for loyalty or payment to ease discontent. The use of these resources is not subject to standing rules or institutions, such as a constitution or the oversight of a representative body, so that outcomes are swayed primarily by the inclination of the monarch and contextual factors such as the presence and persistence of unhappy elites, the contingencies of history, and chance.

Oligarchy is similar, but the bulk of resources rest in an exclusive ruling group, rather than in the hands of one. This group may be defined by wealth and heredity, as in aristocracies, race, as in apartheid South Africa, or even by spiritual selection, as in modern Tibet before the Chinese invasion. While oligarchies are more likely to face regulations on the use of their resources, be it through a constitution, representative body, or separation of powers with checks and balances, these constraints are weak. Constitutional guarantees are not significant and/or do

not reach all citizens, representative bodies are not so representative, and collusion occurs across branches of government so that real control remains in the hands of the few.

(4) *Democratic systems aim to achieve "rule of the people" by ensuring at least a minimum of political resources are distributed universally and constraining those that are not.*

In this way people are empowered to have a greater say in governance, and so this definition is consistent with the general thrust of democratic theory that has come before. I present point 4 as the defining characteristic of any democratic system.

Whether a democracy achieves "rule of the people" depends on its success at naming, distributing, and constraining political resources so that they operate as if held equally. When this fails, democracy deteriorates into the rule of the few or the rule of the many in practice- a point powerfully illustrated by Robert Dahl's theory of polyarchy and his subsequent emphasis on the importance of "political equality" in democratic practice (Dahl 1957; 1989; 1998).[9] While this thesis casts its own definition of the ideal democratic structure, it will not present a developed program of how this can be achieved beyond suggesting a few critical elements to consider. At present, I will constrain myself to a description of commonly utilized mechanisms.

Modern practice meets this universal minimum by establishing electoral systems and granting all able adults suffrage. In other words, today's democracies name and distribute the vote as a basic and universally held political resource. The ability to use this resource to its fullest potential without undue infringement is reinforced by legally and/or constitutionally guaranteed civil and political rights. Freedoms of speech, press, and association protect those

[9] My definition of democracy has been greatly influenced by Dahl's work. Although he does not make a distinction between forms of government on the basis of bargaining structures and does not define democracy in this way, we share essential points. He claims democracy can only achieve "rule of the people" by ensuring everyone an equal say in governance ("political equality"). In general we agree, though where he lists 5 characteristics of democracy that give political equality, I focus on how democratic systems structure bargaining to achieve similar ends.

who have few resources beyond the vote. When money and prestige are not available to mobilize in political battles, citizens may still make a case for the rightness of their cause and enlist like-minded others to pool their voting power behind a candidate or issue. Furthermore, they cannot be prevented from doing so by anyone who might otherwise have the resources to stop them.

The vote as political resource and protective rights as constraints are central to all liberal democracies today. Other constraints appear repeatedly in modern democratic practice and deserve note, although they are not as universally upheld as voting and its attending protections. First, institutional arrangements can act as a constraint on the free reign of a narrow interest within a voting framework. When this interest is a majority, judicial review, separation of powers, and checks and balances protect against majority tyranny. When this interest is a resource-rich minority, specific legislation that limits the use of those resources is needed. Laws against blackmail, corruption, and arm-twisting, restrictions on lobbying practice and campaign contributions, and the protective measures of transparency requirements are the best examples.

What to make of a transition to democracy, part 1

So if democracy is simply a particular way of structuring political bargaining, what does a transition to democratic practice actually change for citizens? It depends on how much the new system differs from the old, of course. When a transition to democracy does not meet our expectations for improved policy outcomes, we must look to how the new system names, distributes, and constrains political resources, and how this diverges (or does not) from both the previous system and the democratic ideal for our answer. In the case of many democracies we are disappointed because of the new system's proximity to the old and remaining distance from the ideal.

Finally, it is important to cast this message in terms of power and power relations. This has two advantages. First, it breaks through the otherwise sterile language of bargaining theory that can mask domineering processes in benign tones. Using the term "power" to explain outcomes is therefore more accurate, and at the same time a better tool in public discourse to organize for change. Second, it reveals the full importance of political resources and justifies why they are an appropriate focus for an entire approach to differentiating political systems and defining democracy. As the primary means to social power (be it political, social, or economic), what resources are, who holds them, and how they can be used is critical to any analysis of social outcomes.

II. THE ENDURING IMPORTANCE OF POWER

The influence of neo-classical economics in the social sciences, the global spread of markets, and the replication of market-like mechanisms in other social spheres (including governance) has increasingly marginalized power studies in academia. Terms like dominance and subordination, exploitation, and race/class/sexuality/gender supremacy and hierarchy fade when we begin to talk about producers and consumers, exchange, competition, supply and demand, and the invisible hand. Perhaps power is a useful concept in pre-capitalist and pre-democratic societies, but today's advanced countries have moved beyond such concerns – particularly to the degree that they adopt neo-classical modes of operation.

Attitudes like these are symptomatic of self-aggrandizing and congratulatory thinking that views western capitalism and political development as the zenith of human achievement. Today's forms are treated as a significant break from the past, a new dawn of individual freedom

and possibility, the "end of history"[10] – when no such break has actually occurred. In fact, power remains as relevant today as it always has been. It is simply the bargaining structures of yesterday that have changed to mediate its use. Analyzing how power relations operate in society, and how they are or are not affected by changes in political systems, is a central theme of this thesis.

We have already assumed that politics in its essence is bargaining, and that political systems differ in the ordering principles that structure this bargaining. I will proceed to define power as it operates through the bargaining process with particular attention to the structure of democratic bargaining.

What is power?

The most useful definitions of power reject a *distributive* understanding that treats power as a quantifiable good that individuals may hold, and favors the view that power is primarily a social *relation* (Young 1990:ch.1). As such, it is a relative, rather than an absolute measure. While it may still be relevant to talk about power with respect to an individual's capacity to achieve tasks that are not contingent on other individuals (a "powerful" woman who can lift heavy weights, or a "powerful" computer that can analyze reams of data), this type of "outcome power" is not relevant to the study of social phenomena in general or politics in particular (Dowding 1991:48).

The most useful definition of power as a relation comes from an R. Harrison Wagner essay that, ironically, was trying to rebuff one put forth by Robert Dahl in an earlier work. I will accept Dahl's definition with Wagner's additional insight and elaborate on how it may be

[10] Fukuyama (1992)

operationalized in the bargaining context. However, I will reject Wagner's ultimate conclusion that we discard the term "power" in favor of another label for the same process.

Power is A's ability to induce B to do *X*, which she would otherwise not do. **This is accomplished by altering B's expected utility of *X* versus the expected utility of not performing *X* (which we will call *Y*)**. The first element comes from Dahl (1957), the second from Wagner (1969). Notice that to speak meaningfully about power in accordance with this definition, we are either assuming a B or referring to the sum of a person's power relations – all of the people whose preferences can be altered by A on a given issue or range of issues. Therefore, to say the President of the United States is powerful is to say she has the ability to make a lot of people do things they would otherwise not do.

We can imagine this occurring via four distinct avenues, which may operate in isolation or in combination with each other. As A, we can induce B to perform *X*, by:

(1) Increasing the relative utility of X with **carrots**

"I will pay you to scratch my back"

(2) Decreasing the relative utility of Y with **sticks**

"I will kick you if you don't scratch my back"

(3) Altering the *perceived* utility of X and/or Y by **controlling information**

"You should scratch my back, there is definitely no rash there"

(4) **Restricting B's choice set** by eliminating higher-utility alternatives

"Now that I've locked you in this room with me, you might as well scratch my back" [11]

Notice that 1-2 are direct applications of resources, while 3-4 only indirectly affect outcomes. [12]

[11] An extensive review of other rational choice models of power can be found in Dowding (1991), including ones that produce lists similar to 1-4 above. See Harsanyi (1962) for the most sophisticated description of bargaining strategies, which extends beyond the elements of my simplified list.

Like Wagner, I will use the example of "your money or your life" for further illumination. Upon first blush, this does not appear to be a bargaining situation at all, but a violent hold-up. Yet, the person being mugged must make the active decision to take out her wallet and offer it to the attacker. She still has the option, however uninviting, of losing her life instead (Wager 1969:6). Let *x* represent the utility of parting with her money, *y* be the utility of refusal, and *a* the value of the mugger's threat, so that our woman's preferences are altered in the following way by the mugger's attack:

$x < y \quad \rightarrow \quad x > y + a$ (we can assume the utility of death is a negative value)

If this situation appears morally reprehensible, it is no help to deny that it is bargaining. A better strategy towards fighting this kind of occurrence is to distinguish the element of physical threat as problematic, give it a name (coercion), and proceed to campaign against the legitimate use of coercive tactics in bargaining situations. This argument also serves to reveal the pervasiveness of bargaining even in autocratic regimes: while able to rely on sticks more often than carrots and rhetoric to get their way, monarchs and dictators are no less practiced bargainers than their democratic counterparts. It is simply that they are in a position, as holders of the vast majority of resources who do not face the constraint of established citizens' rights, to dominate the bargaining arena and achieve their desired ends. In other words, they are incredibly powerful.

Normally economists/classical liberals conceive of bargaining as the absence of such dominance – bargaining instead connotes consent and mutual improvement. For example,

[12] Indirect use of political resources, or points 3-4, can be overlooked in applied political analysis. The transition to democracy in Mexico presented an apparent paradox to researchers. Why did Mexican squatter communities, no longer subject to threats or likely to receive handouts, continue to vote for their pre-democracy patrons instead of new populist candidates more amenable to policy in the squatters' interest? Holzner (2004) was able to explain this paradox as the result of the patron's ability to control the information available to squatters through restrictive political machines.

Wagner rejects the term "power relations" in favor of "the exercise of influence in interdependent decisions," but by doing so obscures the effect that highly skewed resource distributions and the absence of constraints can have on the nature and outcomes of the bargaining process.

To accept the definition given here is to appreciate fully the importance of political resources as a *means of holding power*; they can be used to alter the incentives and thus behavior of others so as to achieve ends that would not otherwise arise. The political arena is therefore a power arena, and how this arena is structured both enables and legitimizes how power operates in society- even when that power leads to outcomes we desire to call unjust.

What to make of a transition to democracy, part 2

This suggests that a transition to democracy must significantly alter the power relations that already exist in a society – either equalize them or de-politicize the resources that under-gird their existence – if it is to achieve the democratic ideal. In highly unequal societies marked by severe resource disparity and hierarchal power relations, this becomes a daunting task. Thus, the recognition given to problems of inequality by scholars of Latin America's third wave was not misplaced, even if their ultimate concerns were.

III. EMPRICAL FINDINGS OF DEMOCRATIC POLICY OUTCOMES

Before applying the framework above to the Brazilian case, it will be helpful to survey what empirical studies have uncovered about democracy's ability to serve the interests of underprivileged citizens. While the question itself has been posed for quite some time, cross-national and large-n studies are relatively recent additions to the debate, and are useful for supporting or refuting broad theoretical claims.

Amartya Sen's now famous work on famines is an excellent place to begin, and suggests democracy has some limited advantages for safeguarding basic needs against avertable disasters.[13] Sen reveals that most famines are caused not by large shortfalls in the food supply, but occur when sizeable groups of people cannot establish entitlements to food through growth or purchase. This may result from a variety of factors beyond crop failure such as unemployment, a loss of relative purchasing power, and a drop in the market value of products sold to buy staple foods. Furthermore, the famines that ensue are not indiscriminant. They tend to claim the poor and marginalized whose entitlements were already precariously low and could not withstand additional losses. It is rare that famines affect more than 5-10% of the total population of a country, and thus, preventing them is not costly and requires only sufficient information and political will.

Democratic systems can provide both through the incentives they place on leaders to be accountable to their people, and the tendency of free press and public debate to disseminate information about impending crises. This is the explanation Sen endorses for why famines have occurred in non-democratic China, Ethiopia, and Bangladesh and not under similar circumstances in democratic India, Botswana, and Zimbabwe. However, the same studies show that where democracies succeed in averting preventable disasters, they are not necessarily equipped to fight endemic deprivation. While India is the central example of famine aversion, it also has alarmingly high rates of malnutrition and child mortality and is out-performed on these measures by China.

Furthermore, recent stateside events suggest that democracies may only act on *particular types* of preventable human disaster- those that advance slowly. The loss of life and property in Hurricane Katrina followed a pattern that was predictable, as long as the observer had an

[13] Sen (1983); Drèze and Sen (1991); Sen (1999)

understanding of the persistent segregation of poor black Americans from opportunity and the precarious nature of survival that it caused.[14] While the onset of Katrina was inevitable, the death and destruction were not, just as drought and economic insecurity will not necessarily lead to famine. Prevention of human loss is determined by the levels of public investment before hand: strong levies and universal public transportation and evacuation procedures in the case of hurricanes, and economic safety nets and government food stockpiles in the case of famine. So why are the group-wise losses from famines averted in democracy but not those from other disasters like Katrina? The answer lies in the time needed for the protective mechanisms of information and accountability to serve their purpose. Famines develop over weeks and carry early warning signs, and death from hunger and its attending opportunistic diseases proceeds slowly. Hurricanes develop, kill, and die themselves in a matter of hours while following a trajectory that is difficult to predict. This leaves little time for information to disseminate, coalitions to form, and pressure to build on government officials for action. The results of Sen's work hold, but are at minimum contingent on issues of time.

Turning to intervention against persistent deprivation, David Lake and Matthew Baum find a very strong correlation between democratic practice and the provision of health and education essentials (Lake & Baum 2001). The authors tested between 35 and 110 countries on 17 variables including literacy rates, fourth grade enrollments, access to clean water, the physician-to-citizen ratio, and immunizations. They found that democracy had a significant

[14] The assertion that Katrina losses were predictable and preventable may strike readers as preposterous, given the pervasive public denial of race- and class-wise inequality in the U.S. However, many living this reality and the researchers following their plight were shocked by the tragedy, but not ultimately surprised that victims were concentrated among poor blacks. For more, see actual "opportunity maps" of New Orleans showing the low levels of investment and opportunity in black neighborhoods produced by the Kirwan Institute at <http://www.kirwaninstitute.org/publications/kirwanpublications.html>, and Hartman & Squires, eds., *There is No Such Thing as a Natural Disaster: Race, Class, and Hurricane Katrina* (New York: Routledge, 2006).

positive effect on health and education provisioning, both when comparing many nations at a single point in time and when following them through regime transitions across time.

Large-n studies of this nature are useful for identifying broad trends like those above, but they can also be highly misleading. First, it is difficult to identify a statistic as an acceptable proxy for human wellbeing. By distilling improvements in the human condition into a number, much of the local history and context that gives the number meaning is lost. Second, even when a reliable type of statistic is agreed upon, there is the difficulty of finding trustworthy calculations that exist across many countries.

These concerns prompted Michael Ross to re-visit the Lake and Baum study- and six others making similar claims- to assert that democracy shows no discernable advantage in outcomes for poor people (Ross 2006). Highlighting the unreliability of statistics like school enrollment rates and medical staff, and revealing the selection bias produced by eliminating many high performing non-democratic states from the rolls for not keeping such records, Ross constructs a different regression model. His study of 168 states uses only child and infant mortality as dependent variables because they are widely kept, highly trustworthy, and are sensitive to many important factors that cannot be so dependably measured (like female education, enrollments, and medical personnel). While Ross agrees that democracies tend to *spend* more on social programs for the poor, outcomes show no discernable difference from other regimes, challenging any inherent superiority of representative government to make a difference in the lives of underprivileged citizens.

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As we can see, the empirical evidence of democracy's superior outcomes for vulnerable citizens is slim. This chapter has advanced a framework to begin an investigating into why this

holds, proposing we look to the political resources that governing systems confer on underprivileged groups and the rules and available strategies that constrain or facilitate their use. When outcomes after a transition are under scrutiny, this kind of analysis leads to the examination of social power relations and how they are (or are not) changed even as the ordering principles of governing systems do. The remainder of this thesis will apply the framework presented in Chapter 1 to the case of urban slum communities in Brazil's democratic transition with two aims. First, the application can illustrate the usefulness of the frame in illuminating and explaining outcomes. However, I offer it as more than just an example for the interested theorist, but as an attempt to diagnose the real and pressing problems facing a group of poor and exploited people, with conclusions unique to their experience and urgent in their own right, grand scholarly points aside. Where my theoretical account is found lacking, I hope that drawing attention to the continued abuse of the Brazilian urban poor is sufficient to warrant the exercise.

CHAPTER 2: BRAZILIAN INEQUALITY & THE GROWTH OF SLUMS

I. BRAZILIAN INEQUALITY

Latin America's high level of inequality has its roots in the colonial period from the 1500s to early 1800s, when the lust for gold drove Spanish and Portuguese merchants towing African slaves to the Americas, establishing large, wealth-hording expatriate communities that remained after independence from Europe. The lopsided distribution of wealth between colonists and African and indigenous populations persisted through independence and into the 20th century, when neo-liberal development strategies picked up where colonialism left off, perpetuating inequality through free-market capitalism as feudal modes of production faded.

Brazil is a textbook case of this history. As the largest country in the region and one of the largest in the world, millions of Latin America's poor have grown, lived, and died in Brazilian cities, next door to riches on par with those enjoyed in the upper echelons of the most advanced nations. "The social situation of Latin America is a scandal" writes Guillermo O'Donnell (1996:1), and has been so for hundreds of years.

Furthermore, this trend has not changed with the rise of Brazil's modern democracy in 1988.[15] Table 1 shows that levels of poverty and inequality actually increased in the first ten years of the new regime to reach or surpass most 1970 levels. In the last 20 years, Brazil has consistently ranked near or at the top of the most unequal countries in the world. Table 2 shows that while the actual Gini in the democratic period has fluctuated, reality has not drastically

[15] Most scholars use 1985 as the democratic turning-point because chief executive power passed to a civilian in this year. However, Brazil's Constitution was not finalized until 1988, and direct president elections did not occur not until 1989. This thesis splits the transition timeline into three periods, authoritarian (1964-1978), the transition to procedural democracy (1978-1988), and the modern democratic period (1988-present). My delineation of the authoritarian period also differs from accounts that name 1974 as the beginning of the transition. Because severe repression and voting manipulation occurred in response to 1974's opposition electoral gains, elections remained a weak avenue for articulating popular needs. I chose 1978 instead because it is the first in a series of years marked by strong social movement activity for democratic change.

changed. Comparing the two tables, we see that the Gini was 57.1 in 1970 and 57.96 in 2003. Also in 2003, the richest 10% earned 45.8% of the national income, while the poorest 10% earned a mere 0.8% (HDR 2006:336).

TABLE 1: Brazilian Poverty and Inequality 1970-1995

YEAR	GINI Index	% of Extreme Poor	Extreme Poor in Thousands*	% of Moderately Poor	Moderately Poor in Thousands†
1970	57.1	23.8	22,838	49.4	47,352
1972	58.0	18.8	18,958	43.1	43,359
1976	60.0	14.7	16,251	36.0	39,846
1979	60.2	12.3	14,538	31.2	36,975
1980	57.1	10.5	12,735	28.2	34,232
1981	55.0	10.3	12,789	28.7	35,616
1982	54.3	12.0	15,235	21.7	27,587
1983	59.1	15.5	20,186	33.1	43,038
1985	60.6	11.7	15,921	31.5	42,734
1986	56.3	13.0	17,983	25.7	35,614
1987	58.0	14.2	19,982	33.3	47,045
1989	60.7	23.2	33,963	45.4	66,516
1990	61.1	24.5	36,482	46.3	68,980
1992	59.4	22.4	34,571	42.7	65,762
1993	61.7	24.1	37,766	45.4	71,153
1995	61.4	22.9	36,990	43.5	70,224

*corresponds to $1/day, adjusted for 1985 PPP
†corresponds to $2/day, adjusted for 1985 PPP
Source: Londoño & Székley (1997)

TABLE 2: Brazilian Inequality in Global Perspective 1987-2003

YEAR	Brazil GINI	RANK	GINI of RANK 1, or next highest rank	Country
1987	59.31	1	58.26	Guatemala
1988			53.11	Columbia
1989			62.87	Sierra Leone
1990	60.68	1	57.36	Honduras
1991			60.25	Zambia
1992			57.46	Kenya
1993	59.82	3	74.33	Namibia
1994			60.88	Swaziland
1995			63.13	Lesotho
1996	59.98	1	57.47	Chile
1997			58.46	Bolivia
1998	60.66	1	60.66	Columbia
1999			57.92	Columbia
2000			57.77	South Africa
2001	59.25	1	59.21	Haiti
2002			60.05	Bolivia
2003	57.96	2	58.62	Columbia

Source: Author's own, compiled from World Development Indicators (2007)

Implications for Democracy

Democracy and inequality are fundamentally incompatible, insofar as inequalities translate into the political sphere.[16] The Brazilian pattern of income distribution is a unique window into this problem, by virtue of money's importance in politics throughout history, both via a direct relevance in campaign costs and contributions and in its correlation with other political resources. Money, proximity to current officeholders, ties to business and other influential sectors, and skill and experience in a variety of bargaining arenas tend to run together. Gini trends reveal two important points about the democratic transition in particular. First, the

[16] Other scholars who have explored this idea often end up studying capitalist economic systems. For example, both Ralph Miliband (1969) and Robert Dahl (1996) contend that capitalism is, at some level, incompatible with democracy because of its tendency to promote inequality, though they differ in whether the remedy lies in economic or political changes. This thesis takes no particular side, though it does cast a shadow on the prospects for political changes to suffice.

challenge of establishing healthy democratic practice in Brazil was greater than in most other countries when it was undertaken. Second, this challenge remains unmet, as suggested by persistent inequality to this day. Unless Brazil has had anomalous success in de-politicizing financial resources, the data hint that democracy is failing to make quality of life improvements among the most underprivileged citizens, of which income parity is only a small piece.

Evidence from recent neighborhood-level studies of human development in Rio de Janeiro confirm this suspicion. Crossing from exclusive Gávea to the *favela* Complexo do Alemão is the equivalent of leaving Norway for Indonesia on the Human Development Index, or dropping from rank 1 to rank 108 in a global survey of 177 countries (Gávea's 0.970 to Complexo's 0.711). Incidentally, the Brazilian national HDI has not been as low as Complexo de Alemão's for over 17 years. In terms of life expectancy alone, Jardim Guanabara is the equivalent of Sweden with the average resident living 80.45 years, while residents of *favela* Acarí attain an average 63.93 years of life, the rough equivalent of India. This is a difference of 16.54 years in lifespan within the same city![17]

To understand why democracy has not made significant gains in outcomes for Brazilian poor in general and the urban poor in particular, it is necessary to undergo a more holistic investigation of *how* and *why* democracy has (not) changed citizens' quality of life. The demands of such an analysis necessitate the micro-level study of specific groups. Localized group study has its isolated merits, justified by the inherent value of all human life and the importance of protecting and improving it wherever one can. Yet when done correctly, the qualitative and quantitative study of specific groups can also shed light on mechanisms affecting or soon to

[17] Comparison of results from a Rio study by Amorim & Blanco (2003) and the most recent Human Development Report (2006).

affect others, when those mechanisms might otherwise have been obscured by purely quantitative large-n studies.[18]

This thesis will examine the problem of Brazil's struggling democracy through the lens of urban slums in the country's southeast. This slice of the urban poor is an excellent litmus test for democracy's effects on outcomes, being a group both highly abused by the authoritarian regime, but also in a unique position to take advantage of democracy's benefits by virtue of high levels of social capital and proximity to key decision-makers (the familiar "urban bias"). Finally, there is a relatively strong body of English-language literature on favelas that is available in the U.S. compared to other Brazilian social groups, which made completion of this thesis possible.

To refine further the project's scope and thereby increase its accuracy, I will focus specifically on the relationships between slum communities and the state, particularly direct and local instances of tolerance and suppression. While the overall quality of favelado life is a composite sketch of health, education, and economic wellbeing, all of which are all touched by local and federal policy, (as well as spiritual and communal elements often ignored by scholars), these areas are also sensitive to forces only marginally manageable by the state. A focus on government tolerance and suppression avoids the nasty problem of controlling for such forces. I am also confident that the forms of state suppression occurring in slums today dominate the lived experiences of residents (details in chapter 5).

[18] Both of these motivations have been asserted for studying the plight of African Americans, for example. Many civil rights era research promoting voting rights and school integration was undertaken with the goal of improving the attainments for the groups studied. Today's research increasingly aims to link the outcomes of specific groups with overall social health, arguing that the most vulnerable can act as a "miner's canary" and alert us all to toxic elements in the body politic. See Lani Guinier & Gerald Torres (2002) *The Miner's Canary: Enlisting Race, Resisting Power, and Transforming Democracy.*

II. BRAZILIAN URBANIZATION & THE FAVELA PHENOMENON

What is a favela?

A strict and temporally consistent definition of favelas is about as hard to come by as a similar definition for pornography- the exact boundaries are fuzzy,[19] but in the tradition of U.S. Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart, "we know it when we see it."

In the mid 1900s, this meant that favelas were squatter settlements of self-built shacks, dense and chaotically organized without security of tenure, often clinging precariously to hillsides or near swamps, and almost universally underserved by all forms of public service, from water, electricity, roads, trash collection and sewage systems, to healthcare and education access.

Today, the term does not necessarily mean that land is occupied illegally, as many favelas have earned *de facto* assurance of their tenure (though land titles are still infrequent). All favelas, however, have illegitimate origins. Older communities, particularly in Rio de Janeiro, have graduated to multi-story houses made of brick and mortar with better service delivery. While this is in part the result of government action, it is also a function of private investment by favelados, who make incremental improvements to their homes when the perceived risk of eviction is low, even buying single bricks at a time until enough are saved to add a story or rebuild a wall.

Perhaps the most persistent characteristic of favelas, whether the term is translated as "slum," "squatter settlement," or "shantytown," is the aura of illegitimacy that plagues residents even after legal rights have been granted. Janice Perlman has revisited her earlier study of Rio favelas to uncover the lasting residue of second-class citizenship. She re-interviewed one of her most upwardly mobile respondents from 1969, who insisted he was still light-years away from

[19] There is similarly no consensus across levels of government on a favela definition. Local versions range from lengthy specifications by tenure status, service access, infrastructure and crowding, health and hygiene, and minimums for the number of houses included, to only a fewer of these categories, to no definition at all. See both the UN-HABITAT 2003:197 and Fix *et al* 2003:9.

being *gente*, a Brazilian term for "the people" that is used conversationally to indicate inclusion and acceptance (Perlman 2002:131). In this sentiment he was not alone. 85% of respondents in 2003 said they believed that discrimination existed based on favela residence, compared to 80% saying the same for race, 60% for origins outside the city (migrant status), and 53% for gender (Perlman *forthcoming*: 20). Furthermore, Brazilians continue to distinguish favela land from the *asfalto* (literally "asphalt", but figuratively the legitimate city), even for slums that today have paved roads.

Favela History and Urbanization

A superficial narrative of favela history, and one common in the literature, goes something like this: "Today's urban slums originated from rapid and (at least locally) uncontrollable rural-to-urban migration and the dearth of city capacity to manage the influx. Plagues of migrants overwhelmed a few magnet metropolitan areas, and governments remain unable to adequately address the issue to this day." The characterization is that of *squatter settlement as natural disaster*, arising distantly and inevitably from a confluence of macro-level forces beyond the sphere of those city governments ultimately facing the result. In short, favelas are exogenously derived problems for the cities they exist in.[20]

This interpretation is ultimately flawed, the consequence of a myopic focus on the needs and decisions of the migrants-turned-squatters themselves, without an appreciation for how their behavior was structured by the action and inaction of powerful city elites. Even assuming the migrant shock was exogenous to the cities themselves, the specific form of settlement that ensued was not. An accurate representation reveals favelas as endogenously generated *solutions*

[20] This tone is common in many discussions of favela origins, such as those in Ramsdell 1998; Xavier and Magelhães 2003; Fix *et al* 2003; some parts of Perlman 1976; Roniger 1990; as well as most reports written by international agencies, and any government document on the subject.

to the needs of city elites and their constituents, if only tacitly accepted as such and often inadequate for meeting those needs in later years.

While not the first occurrence of favelas, urban squatting came into its own in the 1940s, riding the wave of import substitution industrialization and the shift of resources from agriculture into industry that began around 1930 (Fix *et al*. 2003).[21] However, the rural to urban migration that came to pass was only the first half of the story. Marie Huchzermeyer has found, in her comparative study of South African and Brazilian policy towards informal settlement, that local political dynamics and the cost-minimizing behavior of elites were critical (2004:95). In a period of populist politics, politicians used tenancy laws to cater to settled constituents. Rent control policies like those in São Paulo were politically advantageous, but made construction of low-income housing for new arrivals unprofitable, and ultimately triggered severe shortages and land invasions by migrants (Bonduki 1994:100-105). There was no political sense in running off the migrants, however, because their presence served the interests of local industrial capital in need of both a labor force and an informal sub-proletariat to keep wages low (Pino 1998).

This left local elites with two alternatives: pay for housing themselves or let the migrants squat. The first option was attempted but proved too costly. Rio, for example, flirted with the government construction of "proletarian parks," complete with identification cards, curfews, and lectures over loudspeakers to discipline residents in public morality (Baiocchi 2002). A miserable and costly failure, the initiative was abandoned after only three complexes were built, though it is an interesting footnote in the history of state and urban poor relations. In all other

[21] Favelas are thought to have first hatched onto the Brazilian urban landscape in Rio de Janeiro as the practice of slavery waned towards the abolished of 1882 (Oliveira 1996). An abundance of freedmen and women found themselves both out of work and without property, so that squatting on unoccupied land under self-made shelter became the only viable housing option. There is no data to indicate that favelas were a dominant housing pattern at the time, though it is reasonable to believe they served a useful social function for both ex-slaves and ex-masters.

instances, authorities permitted clandestine residential developments to continue as the most cost effective way to absorb migrants (Kowarick & Ant 1994:123-131), and thereby meet elite needs.

This first period of the migrant boom and elite reaction was responsible for two major types of informal settlement. In São Paulo, new arrivals tended to settle in *cortiços*, or illegal subdivisions without services on the urban periphery, building their own structures on the plots purchased. The largest favela growth occurred in Rio, with land invasions and highly precarious settlement sprouting on inner-city hills and flood plains. Guida Nunes notes that when the dictatorship began, 50% of carioca[22] favelas occupied state or federal land, 44% private property, and 6% land of dubious ownership (Nunes 1976:23). Even today, favelas in Rio continue to outpaced the city proper in growth (Table 3).

TABLE 3: Growth of Favela and City Population in Rio de Janeiro 1950-2000

YEAR	Favela Population	Rio Population	Favelas as Percentage of Rio	Favela Growth Rate	Rio Growth Rate
1950	169,305	2,337,451	7.2		
1960	337,412	3,307,163	10.2	99.3%	41.5%
1970	563,970	4,251,918	13.3	67.1%	28.6%
1980	628,170	5,093,232	12.3	11.4%	19.8%
1990	882,483	5,480,778	16.1	40.5%	7.6%
2000	1,092,958	5,857,879	18.7	23.9%	6.9%

Source: Perlman 2006:158

A second "favela boom" in the 1980s would bring this chaotic settlement pattern to the heart of São Paulo. 5.2% of paulistas[23] lived in favelas in 1980, jumping to 19.8% in 1993 (FIPE/Sehab 1994 in Fix *et al.* 2003:3).

[22] Carioca is an adjective meaning "of Rio de Janeiro"
[23] Paulista is an adjective meaning "of São Paulo"

Favelas as entry point

Any study of Brazilian democratic performance with regard to the underprivileged would have to address the exploding population of favelados. Yet their significance as subject of study does not end there. As a litmus test for how democratic transitions improve the plight of underprivileged citizens, research on favelas carries implications for all precariously sustained social groups in fledgling democracies, including many of the estimated 1 billion squatters across the globe.

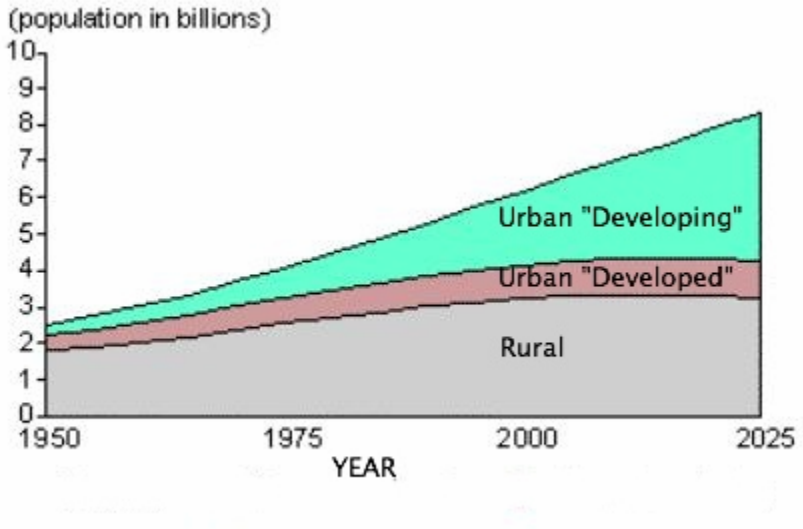
The "litmus test" value of favelas derives from their social and geographic location. Not the poorest or most neglected social group, favelados are highly integrated into the processes that drive the progress of their society (Perlman 1976). Slum residents live in the immediate vicinity of the most powerful people in the country, just over the fortified concrete walls of the grandest mansions in Brazil. They work in the factories of the largest industries, provide services essential to the health of their cities through the informal economy, offer entertainment for tourists and other residents in Carnaval celebrations by way of world famous samba schools, and use and are used by the country's most potent political machines. This integration is exceedingly asymmetric, to the point of being exploitative, but the web of connections linking favelados to the corridors of power makes them highly sensitive to how those corridors shift and change. Attempting to diagnose the early weaknesses of democratic practice with the study of the isolated rural poor during the transition, for example, would not yield as many helpful insights.

By investigating favela life since the post-authoritarian transition, this thesis aims to diagnose the weaknesses of democracy with respect to any social group characterized by a precarious state of survival. In this way, whether the ravages of poverty, discrimination, various

forms of social and economic exploitation, or neglect has left a community fighting for the chance to flourish, certain pitfalls in democratic practice can be identified as obstacles for all and targeted for change. This applies equally well to any society, no matter how affluent, for all struggle with forces that separate and oppress.

Of all the diverse groups implicated as an audience for this study, the conclusions will be most relevant to other squatters and slum dwellers of the "developing world." This is no small collection! Migration that bloats the ranks of the urban poor is occurring at unprecedented rates, and the rolls of shantytown dwellers are expanding exponentially. For example, Figure 1 shows the estimated size of world population by 2025. By then, a majority of people will live in urban areas, with the lion's share of urban growth occurring in "developing countries."

FIGURE 1: World Urban Population Growth 1950-2025



Source: Brockerhoff (2000)

Such explosive growth in the world's poorer nations is already conspiring to make squatting a global phenomenon. A list of the planet's 20 largest slums include countries from every region, from India, Indonesia, and China, to Iraq, Egypt, and Pakistan, to Kenya, South Africa, and Angola, to Haiti, Mexico, and Peru (Davis 2006:28).

III. INSIDE THE FAVELA: LEADERSHIP & SOCIAL STRUCTURE

The study of Brazilian favelas reveals rich and complex social structures. In the face of state and social neglect, squatters construct community networks and informal leadership forms to survive. Any investigation of slum politics and slum-state relations must examine the favela neighborhood associations that come to function, with varying degrees of success, as the voice of their abused and neglected residents. Understanding the role of neighborhood associations as a manifestation of social capital will prove critical to modeling how the reintroduction of democratic politics has altered but not improved the precarious nature of favelado survival.

What is a neighborhood association?

Neighborhood associations go by different names depending on the Brazilian city, from *Sociedades de Amigos do Bairro* in São Paulo, to *Associações de Moradores* in Rio de Janeiro. They provide two critical functions: enhancing community life through maintaining order and nurturing cooperation, and performing external advocacy on the behalf of residents. Because city maps tend to exclude favelas, it is common for neighborhood associations to recognize officially avenue names and oversee mail delivery. Other activities that enhance local life include initiating *mutirão* (communal labor days where residents might dig ditches or raise an elderly resident's house), assisting local religious groups, cultural organizations, and children's soccer clubs, and establishing favela residency requirements and procedures for conflict resolution.[24] It is not necessary to detail the advocacy work of favela leaders here, as it will be a central focus of chapters 3-5.

[24] For examples of *mutirão*, see Scheper-Hughes (1992:17). A full study of the types of conflict resolution utilized in the favela setting can be found in Rodrigues (2002).

Joan Nelson has found that association structures vary widely in poor urban settlements the world over, and range from the simple to the complex, tacitly accepted to constitutionalized, and cliquish to participatory (Nelson 1979:ch 7). The simplest Brazilian associations consist of a president and a few assistant positions. These are most often elected, except in cases where the leaders are popular enough or the residents apathetic enough to take their authority as given. While some presidents seek ample community input, the simplest associations also tend to be highly centralized. The president holds a power monopoly, often the lone contact with political elites to secure concessions for the community. Residents are not involved in the association, content with the leadership so long as the president is able to secure good gifts from state agents; public meetings are rare. In contrast, the most sophisticated associations boast a panel of positions with strict term limits, regular elections and rotation of residents through office, and considerable power sharing between the president and other officials. Community meetings occur regularly, and many more residents have input into the goals and activities of the leadership. Constitutions are fairly common in all favelas, but like those of voluntary organizations in the U.S., neighborhoods vary widely in the attention and reverence they pay to this document (Perlman 1976:166). Robert Gay's *Popular Organizations and Democracy In Rio de Janeiro* presents two excellent and in-depth case studies that illustrate the range of possible leadership structures and styles of favela neighborhood associations (1994).

Where do they come from?

The origins of Brazilian neighborhood associations are consistent with Joan Nelson's finding that very few bubble up from the ground (Nelson 1979:292-302). When this does occur, leadership is either present at a slum's founding (whoever organized the land invasion, if it was

deliberate) or arises ad hoc in response to the immediate threat of eviction. It is rare that at least a nudge did not come from outside actors, who may either establish or institutionalize association leadership.

Political parties and candidates are the first example of outside intervention, and have encouraged local associations as a way to build a convenient base in an otherwise dirty and confusing chaos of shacks and voters. After the collapse of the Estado Novo dictatorship in 1945 and the reinvigoration of competitive populist politics, favelas became an important electoral base for Rio's candidates. Because of their large numbers, geographic concentration, and defined interests, local politicians tried to co-opt the communities by installing favela administrators, even handing out plots of land to needy supporters (Nunes 1976:20-21). Favela connections with political machines, civil society organizations, and state agencies have undergone many changes since, but links are quick to re-congeal when conditions favor it. Happ and König cite estimates that the number of truly independent associations in Rio by 2003 was around 10-15% of the total (Happ & König 2003:160). The following chapters will detail how the transition from authoritarian to democratic practice has affected the political power of slum communities through a focus on the relationship of neighborhood associations to state agents.

CHAPTER 3: AUTHORITARIAN BARGAINING (1964-1978)

This chapter introduces a resource-centric model of bargaining outcomes that will be used to analyze the fortunes of Brazilian slum dwellers before, during, and after the democratic transition. Save for social capital, slums had very few political resources in the authoritarian period. As a result, local governments tended to ignore or evict favelados, at times offering public housing as a strategic palliative measure that ultimately served elite needs at the faveldo's expense.

I. MODELING OUTCOMES: FAVELA RESOURCES AND STATE RESPONSE

As explained in chapter 1, political power is the ability to achieve desired political outcomes by inducing changes in the behavior of others. This is in turn a function of the resources available to all relevant parties, the standing rules and vagaries of context that constrain their use, and the strategic behaviors bargainers employ. When outcomes consistently and unjustly favor some groups at the expense of others, we must look to these categories for the remedy.

In analyzing the political fortunes of Brazilian squatters, the first and most glaring problem is that of highly unequal resource distribution. With resources so terribly polarized between the impoverished masses and the wealthy few, outcomes tend to favor the latter. Rules, context, and strategic behavior can serve to modify and mitigate this trend, but are not likely to overcome it without adjusting the base level of resource distribution in the process. Thus, a resource-centric model of bargaining illuminates the most problematic elements of Brazilian

political practice with respect to the urban poor. While such a model may not identify all of the factors contributing to consistently meager outcomes, it will pinpoint the most egregious.[25]

The model presented here describes the interaction of favela communities with the state and its agents (local executives, bureaucrats, and political candidates). In the bargaining process, it is assumed that the favelado's primary goal is to improve her quality of life through extracting concessions from the state in the form of public goods, services, and protective guarantees. The state agent's primary goal is to increase her power, though even in an authoritarian system she will be constrained by the interests of other powerful elite constituents (recall the plight of Machiavelli's *Prince*).

When bargaining with the state and its agents, favelas hold three key political resources: **size**, **social capital**, and (in a democratic regime) the **value of their collective vote**. We can assign favelas a hypothetical "resource score" based on how the variables interact. Size and social capital are assumed to be independent of each other, while the collective vote value is a function of how the two combine. This gives the following formula,

$$\text{Resources} = f(v(S,C))$$

where v is collective vote value, S is size, and C is social capital. In contrast, the state's resources are the implicit or explicit use of force, which I will call state violence, and exclusive control over those goods and protections favelados seek.

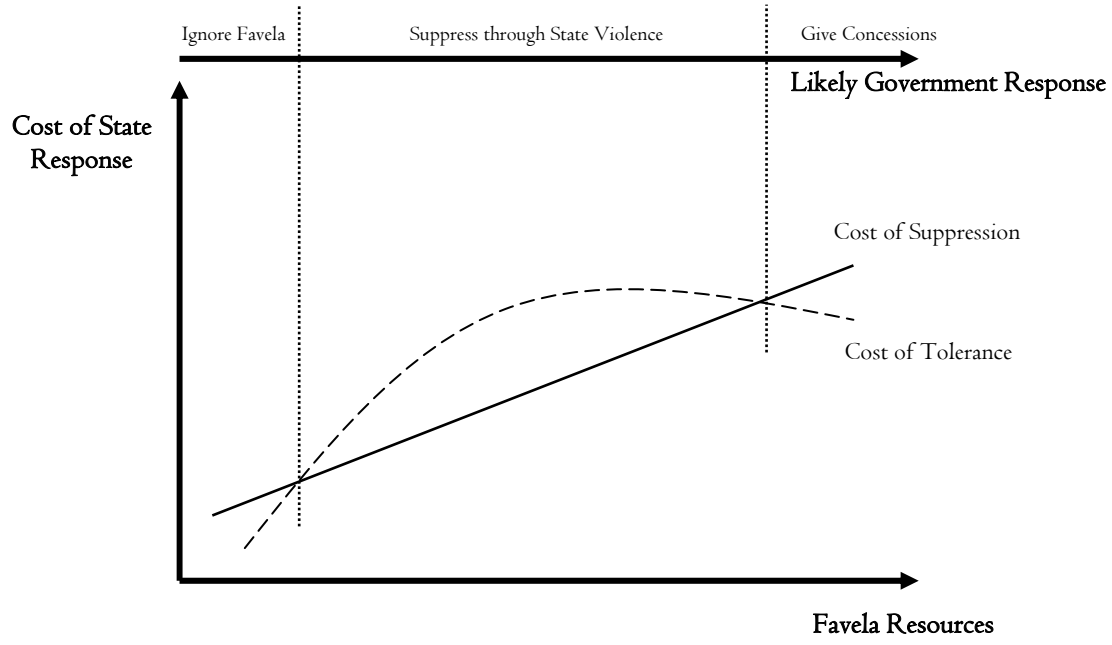
Finally, when faced with a squatter community of a given resource score, the state and its agents may respond with **tolerance** or **suppression**. It is assumed that government agents will select the "cheaper" of the two in a given situation. Furthermore, tolerance may be passive (where favelas are ignored), or active (were favelas are granted concession), though the latter is

[25] Throughout the next three chapters, I will include details about rules, context, and strategy as I apply the resource model in order to provide a more holistic analysis.

obviously more costly. Similarly, there are several forms suppression may take, depending on the rules constraining the use of state violence that a given governing system provides. Examples of suppression through state violence that affect slum dwellers include forced evictions and indiscriminant policing.

Plotting the favela resource score along an axis against the cost of government response produces Figure 2: [26]

FIGURE 2: Influence of Favela Resources on State Response (Authoritarian)



To make this graph palpable, we can interpret it for a hypothetical case under the military regime. Imagine a land invasion in Belo Horizonte in 1970. The favela begins small, just 15 people, on an unattractive hillside plot above a business district. Even if the social bonds between all 15 squatters are high, this corresponds to a very low resource score. At this point, state agents face no incentive to suppress the squatters and the favela will be ignored. In fact,

[26] Offered in the spirit of O'Donnell (1979:87), whose similar graph of the relative costs of government suppression and tolerance as societies modernize explained the rise of bureaucratic authoritarianism in Brazil.

politicians desire a few small favelas as the cheapest way to house migrants, who serve the interests of constituents in business and industry by swelling proletariat and sub-proletariat ranks.

This equilibrium of neglect will only hold so long as state agents do not face pressure to behave otherwise. Unfortunately, not all city residents welcome slums, which carry associations with poverty, grime, crime, and disease. The size of a favela, while raising its resource score, also raises its threat profile among upper-class citizens. As slums expand, so do the fears of resource-rich groups, who begin to pressure officials to act. Beyond a certain point, this pushes state response into the realm of suppression.

The model further suggests that when favelas achieve a high enough resource score (a combination of large size and strong community bonds under authoritarian conditions), the shear cost of suppression will be enough to induce concessions, even from a dictatorial state. However, this hypothetical situation would be rare- the size requirement alone is great, and elites and government agents would likely unite to stunt or eliminate the community before this point could be reached. It is thus no surprise that eviction policy carried the day under the Brazilian dictatorship.

This model predicts favelas experiences at the hands of the state based on resource endowments. Yet, government response can be modified and mitigated by the standing rules that govern the use of state violence, contextual factors, and favelados' own strategic behavior. The remainder of this chapter will discuss how constraints on the use of force and each side's bargaining strategies influenced outcomes on the ground. Through this exercise, I hope to recreate the reality faced by many of Brazil's urban poor under the authoritarian state.

II. INTRO TO AUTHORITARIAN REGIME

The current governing system is not Brazil's first experience with democracy, which actually began with the ousting of strong-man Getúlio Vargas in 1945. Countering a period of rising popular pressure, the military staged a coup in 1964. The ensuing regime was a new form of governance reflecting the set of relations necessary to impose authoritarian rule on a partially modernized society with growing populist voices. Guillermo O'Donnell famously called the result "bureaucratic authoritarianism:" 'authoritarian' because it aimed to depoliticize the citizenry and achieve a strong autonomous state, and 'bureaucratic' because government control proceeded by encapsulating[27] key social groups, and giving technocrats in large public and private bureaucracies control over policy (O'Donnell 1979:90-91).

The new regime aimed to complete Brazil's modernization with technical solutions backed by military might. Social consequences were of little or no consequence. Over the next 15 years, the military installed a series General-Presidents, eliminated most parties, suspended the political rights of opponents, recessed Congress and state legislatures at will, overrode the Constitution, and packed/purged the Supreme Court (for more, see Roett 1992: ch.6). Policy focuses for the regime centered on domestic and transnational big-business, exports, urban centers, and the upper classes (de Medeiros 1986:69-78).

III. FAVELA BARGAINING POSITION: SQUATTER RESOURCES

The condition of the urban squatter in Brazil from 1965-1978 was marked by an extremely low resource endowment, limited to the first two variables of the resource function

[27] By 'encapsulation,' O'Donnell means that governments constrained strong social sectors by giving them political representation through "organizations whose legal existence [is] dependant upon government authorization. Bargaining and interest representation [are] limited to leaders at the top of these organizations, and spontaneous modes of demand-formulation, as well as dissent, have no legitimate place under the new political conditions" (O'Donnell 1979:88)

(size and social capital). While voting continued under the military dictatorship, heavy suffrage restrictions and electoral rules conspired to ensure that elections served the function of top-down control rather than bottom-up accountability.

Size

Estimates of favela size are difficult to come by and vary widely. Thus while there are many absolute approximations, it is best to focus on the relative share of city population residing in slums, and on inter-city comparison. Because the favela boom occurred Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo at different times, the experience of favelados in each location can illustrate the effects of the size variable on state responses under the dictatorship.

The favela boom hit Rio de Janeiro in the 1940s, so that residents living in approximately 169 favelas had grown to a sizeable 13% of the city population by 1970. Driven from poor rural areas in search of industrial jobs, squatters settled precariously on the steep hillsides in close proximity to business and affluent residential districts. In contrast, most of São Paulo's poor communities developed as *cortiços* on the urban periphery. Land invasion and squatting closer to São Paulo's center did not begin in earnest until the late 1970s, so that favelados only made up 1% of the city's population in 1973 and 5.3% in the 1980s (Taschner 1995:193).

Applying these figures to the model, we should expect divergent policy responses in each metropolis, which is in fact the case. In São Paulo, favelas remained under local government radar, which carried out intermittent evictions but otherwise had no city-wide policy. Rio's swelling inner-city slum dwellers were not so lucky, and faced an onslaught of local agencies and actions aimed at eradicating informal settlement entirely. More will be said on this at the end of the chapter.

Social Capital

While large community size can induce government suppression, slum dwellers may also use it strategically to their advantage. Harnessing the strength of numbers requires social capital, and favelas are marked by surprisingly strong neighborhood associations in this period, reflecting positively in this element of their resource score. The existence of an active neighborhood association lowers transaction costs and lends itself to political organizing.

In 1969, Janice Perlman found that an average of 15% of the adult favela population in Rio belonged to neighborhood associations, although this number varies from place to place, compared to the 14% in local Energy Commissions (these are now defunct) and 13% in social or sport groups (Perlman 1976:164). In a repressive political climate, this is a striking number. Unfortunately, there is no data on neighborhood association participation rates in other cities.

Associations in the authoritarian period also nested sporadically in larger city-wide and even national movements. While often short-lived, these organizations served to pool the social capital of disperse favelas for strategic action. Networking organizations operated at two particular times: first at the beginning of the dictatorship in response to new hard-line evictions policies, and several years later after the *abertura* made space for popular movements. The *Federação das Associações de Moradores na Guanabara* (FAFEG) is an excellent example of the first, which united 100 carioca slums to fight evictions the year of military takeover (Perlman 1976:205-6). São Paulo provides illustration of the second, where the 1978 birth of the *Movimento das Favelas de São Paulo* responded to removal threats of mayor Olavo Setúbal (Gohn 1991:97). At the same time the national *Movimento de Defesa dos Favelados* formed with

the assistance of the Catholic Church, later drafting an amendment on urban reform that was submitted for inclusion in the 1988 Constitution (see Gohn 1991; Huchzermeyer 2004:112)

Finally, some favelas retained contacts with old patrons from the pre-authoritarian democracy, constituting an outward-reaching form of social capital. There is no direct data available on this subject, though it can be inferred. First, it is known that most neighborhood associations did not bubble up from the ground, and held ties with local political machines as far back as the Vargas era. Furthermore, Janice Perlman's study notes evidence of votes-for-services schemes between favelados and political candidates before the 1964 coup (1976:207). It is only logical that favelas, now facing suppression under the dictatorship, should appeal to old patrons still occupying government posts for protection. While purges of opposition politicians occurred under the dictatorship, many conservative patrons would have remained. This elite connection surely helped in limited instances.

The Vote

Spotty election coverage was the only avenue for non-elites to hold ruling powers accountable during the dictatorship. Normally, this would count as a squatter resource, but elections were so deeply biased and limited by various presidential decrees that they could not offer an effective constraining mechanism on the actions of local executives. Instead, polls operated as a control on local politics by national-level military forces. In fact, many poor citizens were disenfranchised by literacy requirements, so that it would be inaccurate to say favelados had the vote as a viable political resource under the authoritarian regime.

Riordan Roett provides a helpful overview of election details (1992:58-63). As of 1966, relevant executives at all levels were appointed: the President by Congress, then by military

commission, then finally through a controlled electoral college. Most state governors were appointed by their legislatures, and capital city mayors by their state governors. Even after appointment, executives were subject to national-level oversight. In July of 1966, 32 state and local officials were removed from office and their political rights revoked for 10 years. A similar purge occurred again in October of that year, and the new Constitution of 1967 declared 700 additional towns as "national security risks" and revoked their local elections. December of 1968 saw yet more dismissals, and in January 1969, 59 state deputies and 5 more mayors were expelled.

Citizens of most large urban areas could only vote directly for local and state legislatures, whose accountability was further compromised by tight restrictions on party membership and competition. First, the military banned all other political parties save the government's ARENA and the sanctioned MDB opposition in 1965. An initial expulsion of approximately 3,500 individuals in the first 6 months of the regime removed the most dangerous elements, from supporters of the old democracy to progressive voices and other "communists," with additional bans to follow for up-start groups. To complicate further accountability of legislative elections the government introduced *sublegendas*, or party tickets containing several candidates for each contested seat. The seat in question would be awarded to the top candidate of the most popular ticket, even if that candidate had fewer votes than a contender from another party when considered alone (Hagopian 1996:188). Then, in December 1968, Institutional Act No. 5 gave the chief executive power to recess any legislature at any level for an indefinite period (see Roett 1992:130-145 for details on all Institutional Acts).

One may argue that it is inaccurate to assume such consistent poor quality of elections held throughout the entire dictatorship, noting the electoral changes that occurred after the

political *abertura* (opening) that began in 1974. If this were true, the resource scores of favelas would go up, causing an upward shift in the "Cost of Suppression" line. Yet election quality still suffered substantially even after 1974.

Pursued by President Geisel and military moderates, the *abertura* was the beginning of the most prolonged, controlled transition of an authoritarian regime to democratic politics in recent history. It did not proceed uniformly. After the unexpected opposition gains in the 1974 national elections, hard-liners in the military struck back, actually ushering in the most repressive period for elections yet (von Mettenheim 1995:101-104). Regional military commanders stepped up violent attacks on opponents over the next two years, killing the director of São Paulo TV and a prominent labor union leader, among others. A complicated set of new electoral rules and campaign advertising bans were enacted, and managed to recover ARENA's losses in the 1978 elections. Examining the vote totals makes this clear- while the MDB earned 17.1 million votes for Senate to ARENA's 13.2 million, it only received 9 out of 45 seats (*Ibid*.:104). While these results assured the military and allowed President Geisel and his successor to press ahead with political liberalization, manipulation of electoral rules and campaigning restrictions continued into the 1980s.

Throughout these electoral upheavals, many favelados were left out. Suffrage rules were a significant barrier – illiterates could not vote. With 31% of favelados in Rio illiterate and another 44% never finishing elementary school in 1969, it is likely that few were able to participate in the elections at all (Perlman 1979:150).[28]

[28] While the Perlman study reports much higher rates of voter participation among favelados, she did not specify that respondents limit their answer to the authoritarian period. Thus, a response to the question "have you ever voted in an election" would solicit positive responses from those who could vote 6 years previous, but not at the time of the interview.

IV. RULES CONSTRAINING STATE RESPONSE

The exact form state suppression will take depends in part on the rules constraining the use of force. These rules constitute protective guarantees that slum dwellers and others depend on, and are largely determined by the type of governing system (authoritarian, democratic) existing at the time. Not surprisingly, these guarantees were dreadfully low in Brazil from 1964-1979.[29] An absolute right to private property gave squatters no protection against forced evictions, and the lack of constitutional rights precluded avenues for redress against state abuse.

Property laws favor elites

When the military took power, it rescinded the social function of property enshrined in the 1934 Constitution. This "social function" was meant to temper the absolute right to private property by requiring that private use also submit to broader public interests. For a regime bent on Brazil's modernization and economic development, such legislation represented an obstacle to private enterprise (Huchzermeyer 2004: 94). The change left squatters with no legal space to assert land rights, so that tenure was fully subject to the whim of private developers and the state.

It is further likely that the return to absolute property rights indirectly contributed to the creation of favelas themselves. The ability to hold land vacant without challenge enabled rampant land speculation in booming Southeastern cities. As low-income housing is not terribly profitable, owners preferred to sit on their investment for a time, and sell to high-end developers for a bigger price tag at a later date, triggering housing shortages among the poor. With strict property rights in place, the government's hands were tied to intervene and put vacant land to use. The ensuing dearth of affordable housing left more people without shelter while

[29] Censorship was ended and habeas corpus returned in 1979, though full citizen guarantees were not enshrined until the 1988 Constitution

simultaneously preserving uninhabited space that attracted squatters for its proximity to economic opportunity. Thus, the new property law created more squatters with fewer rights.

Constitutional Rights

Roett's study of the military regime reveals how an apparent dedication to constitutionalism was in fact a farce. While initially promising to uphold the old document, General-President Castelo Branco supervised the drafting of a new Constitution in 1967. This new Constitution curtailed political rights including free speech, prohibited non-approved political assembly, ended direct federal elections, permitted law by presidential decree, and centralized many legislative and bureaucratic powers (Roett 1992:130-134). Then again in 1969, a series of Institutional Acts altered the Constitution so severely that many scholars consider it a new system entirely, restricting travel rights, suspending *habeas corpus*, censoring all press and cultural outlets, creating special military courts, and consolidating federal control over state and local police (*Ibid*:136-137). Under these conditions, disappearances, torture, murder, and exile of opponents became common. It is no surprise, then, that government agents would not blush at the relatively tame task of evicting poor migrants off of valuable land.

V. BARGAINING TACTICS

Tactics of favelados

Favelados relied on two bargaining tactics in the authoritarian period: protest and ingratiation. Reliance on one or the other differed by community, but both were often insufficient to avert suppressive measures. Without rights or substantive political resources, the slum dweller

must choose between conflict with the state that she will necessarily lose, or a degrading form of submission to slow a still-ticking clock. It is a precarious state of existence.

In a bargaining framework, protest can be conceptualized as the mobilization of size and social capital resources as a **stick** to deter state agents from carrying out evictions (recall the power list from chapter 1). Up to and during eviction, protest functions to increase government costs associated with removal, and simultaneously to signal the intent to maximize this cost in the future, should eviction policy be considered again. In some instances, protest may also be a tactic to galvanize support from sympathetic onlookers and the media, relieving the pressure put on state officials by eradication-hungry constituents.

Ingratiation is the continued use of pre-authoritarian clientelistic relationships to avert eviction. Clientelism links the powerful to the weak through a patron-client relationship. These ties are mutually beneficial, albeit highly asymmetrical, rational-choice relations wherein the patron delivers goods and/or protective insurance to the client in exchange for a variety of benefits. Client-povided benefits may be substantive (votes or services), or as abstract and superficial (an ego-rub, or a leg up in competition with other patrons over the size of clientele). More will be said about the nature of clientelism in the following chapter, where it plays a much larger role in favela survival. In the authoritarian period, when voting power was cut and other favela resources were low, patron-client ties could only have been as strong as the patron's direct affection for the client, or the satisfaction gained from her expressions of humility and submission.

Tactics of the state

Agents of the authoritarian state, including mayors and housing bureaucrats with the aid of police, mobilized resources through threats, palliative measures, and strategic information control: the **stick** of force, the **carrot** of public housing, and the co-optation of favela leadership.

State violence against squatters under the dictatorship occurred at two principal times: in the act of eviction and in response to protests. The best examples of both are found in Janice Perlman's 1969 Rio de Janeiro study *The Myth of Marginality*, where the use of force succeeded in silencing the local favela movement by 1968. Perlman notes two episodes of eviction resistance supported by FAFEG in particular- the Morro do Pasmado eviction in 1964 and the Jardim America eviction in 1966. In both removals, soldiers with machine guns forced residents from their homes. In the second case, state agents fired randomly into the crowd to discourage revolt (Perlman 1976:205-206).

The government campaign for eradication marched on, and was institutionalized in the 1968 creation of CHISAM.[30] Founded by Governor Carlos Lacerda, this local arm of the National Housing Bank was fashioned with the goal that there would be "no more people living in the slums of Rio by 1976" (*Ibid.:*202). In reaction, FAFEG organized a protest of the agency's creation before its first scheduled favela removal. The response was decisive: FAFEG leaders were arrested, held in secret, and threatened with dire consequences should their activities continue. This was enough to silence FAFEG opposition for the remainder of the dictatorship, while evictions continued and became more violent. In 1969, military police evacuated and burned favela Praia do Pinto, and its leaders disappeared (*Ibid*: 225).

[30] This stands for Coordenacão de Habitacao de Interesse Social da Area Metropolitana do Rio Grande, or the Coordination of Social Interest Housing of the Greater Rio Metropolitan Area.

The second tactic of state agents was the palliative offering of public housing, which functions as a bargaining chip in the following way. When a local government decides to evict a favela, it has committed to expending a certain cost (in police hours and arms) to complete the removal. This cost can be increased by coordinated resistance from the residents themselves. An immediate promise of replacement housing serves to dampen resistance, even if the housing delivered proves entirely inadequate over time. The advantage of the palliative measure is that it prevents a violent flare-up at the point of eviction. In contrast, favelado anger over poor public housing quality, location, and the lack of units available to house all residents evicted will develop slowly over time. Furthermore, scattering residents from single communities over disparate housing projects in peripheral areas can break the social capital networks that would otherwise channel this displeasure into action in the future. Public housing actually increases government power over favela communities by further eroding their resource endowment, a prediction that is supported in the outcomes section of this chapter.

Finally, government agents co-opted slum leadership as a third and final tactic. This is a complex strategy that simultaneously operates as a "carrot" of prestige for the co-opted leader and a form of **information control** over the entire community. Government strategy in São Paulo followed this pattern heavily, particularly in illegal subdivisions on the periphery. Up to 1,100 neighborhood associations had already formed by the start of the dictatorship, which became fertile ground for co-optation by members of the government's ARENA party (Alvarez 1993:195). ARENA city councilmen were known to deliver personal favors to neighborhood association heads, eroding their representative function by alienating them from residents.

In Rio de Janeiro, favela heads were actually coaxed into aiding evictions on a number of occasions. In the case of favela Catacumba, the neighborhood president gave up the community

building to social services in exchange for the uniform of a State Guardsman and control over a neighborhood vigilante police force in the run up to removal (Perlman 1979:225-226). Leaders in other communities recieved temporary roles in the housing bureaucracy, organizing the disbursal of eviction notices and completing surveys of residents for the purpose of assigning public housing placements (*Ibid*.:219).

VI. OUTCOMES

Evictions

With the absolute right to private property and the lack of constitutional rights in place, an era of government eviction was made possible. However, it did not make any individual eviction necessary. This would depend on the relative costs and benefits of any one eviction.

In many instances, favelas faced simple neglect. This is the case in São Paulo, where squatters constituted only a small portion of the population and remained a minor nuisance to affluent citizens. The sheer costs in police hours, arms, and other resources sufficed to deter city-wide evictions policies throughout the dictatorship. Between 1971 and 1979, removals only affected 6% of all favela dwellers in the city (Taschner 1995:210). It is interesting to note, however, that the subsequent paulista favela boom through the 1980s produced enough pressure on the state to carry out evictions even under democracy, exacerbated by a real-estate boom that increased the market value of invaded lands. Widespread removal occurred under the Jânio Quadros administration in 1985-1998, and evictions from the most valuable properties were carried out by Maluf from 1993-1997 (Fix *et al*, 2003:16 and Graham & Jacobi 2002:312-313). Yet at least under the dictatorship there was no such pressing need, so that no policy solutions to

the urban land and housing question were implemented in São Paulo in that period (Bolaffi 1980:169 cited in Ramsdell 1990:171).

In Rio, however, favelas had come to symbolize a threat to city elites. Perlman finds that perceptions of faveals as "parasites" dominated policy discourse. According to this belief, favelas harbored "drunks, prostitutes, and thieves" who misused valuable land and drained city coffers with demands for expensive public services (1976:14-15). With favelado numbers high enough to reach this threat-level, government executives were forced to placate their more powerful citizens and bear the costs to remove the most egregious eyesores. Exact removal numbers are hard to come by, but a few estimates are available. It is thought that removals in Rio de Janeiro from 1963-1972 affected approximately 120,000 people alone (Seidman 1994:213 cited in Huchzermeyer 2004:97), and by 1973 this number is estimated to be at least 175,785, with the governor's CHISAM agency aiming to remove 100 families per day (Perlman 1976:202).

Public Housing

The notion that public housing was nothing more than a bargaining chip in a game whose ultimate object was favela eradication might seem hard to swallow. How can such an expensive and seemingly humane project be reduced to a cost-minimizing removal tactic? In fact, foreign actors and the Brazilian working class absorbed most costs, freeing the state to complete removals with anything but humane long-term ramification.

Before the World Bank began to push self-help programs in 1972, the accepted international strategy for low-income housing was to congregate the urban poor in large, government built complexes, commonly on the periphery where land was cheap (Pugh 1995:63).

Luckily for Latin American governments, geo-political events loosened international purse strings to bring this strategy south. Some of the most ardent supporters of the 1959 Cuban Revolution came from poor urban sectors, which revolutionaries rewarded by transferring tenement ownership from landlords to renters, and by giving squatters thousands of homes vacated by fleeing bourgeoisie (Mathey 1995:251). Appalled by this state of affairs, the United States began channeling funds into pre-emptive public housing initiatives in Latin American cities. USAID promised 20 billion over the next ten years to Latin American countries for this purpose, and began funding projects for eradication and replacement housing in Rio de Janeiro that same year (Taschner 1995:204-205).

Of course, foreign actors did not finance all housing projects. In 1964, the federal government formed the National Housing Bank to fund and direct construction of infrastructure and public complexes. Reviewing studies into the bank's workings, Perlman finds that the majority of housing built by BNH funds went to middle and upper income groups, while 80% of financing came from savings accounts and taxes on working classes (1976:201-204). Thus, foreign funding and working class taxes allowed the Brazilian state to use public housing as a palliative bargaining measure at relatively low cost.

In Rio, where eradication practice was most severe, we can expect that actual housing provision would only be sufficient to avert the threat of violent resistance from poor urban communities, without meeting the actual needs of favelados.

Perlman's research on Rio de Janeiro's relocation practices supports this prediction (1979:212-223 and 230-233). First, public housing sat on the urban periphery, so that already poor residents suffered long and expensive commutes to reach jobs. Second, housing was of substandard quality with unreliable maintenance. Within a few years, many high-rises already

appeared dilapidated. In one instance, residents lived in perpetually damp apartments as unfixed plumbing and roof leaks stained walls and compromised structural integrity. Third, a staggering number of residents were unable to keep up with the new rent payments, and default rates rose to roughly 75% in all of the studies Perlman reviewed. Finally, Perlman names social capital loss as a subtle but critical blow. Vibrant civic activity and community organizations died as residents were scattered across housing complexes. Bonds between neighbors broke and failed to re-form as hopelessness set in. This dearth of community spirit, combined with new problems in income generation and services, created listless centers of despair and crime far worse than the conditions experienced in the original slums. Since Perlman's account of relocating Catacumba residents, the housing complex built to absorb them has gained international notoriety after the film *City of God* dramatized the community's descent into violence and drug traffic.

CHAPTER 4: BARGAINING IN THE TRANSITION (1978-1988)
or THE GOOD NEWS

"Six months after the Charter is passed, every man, woman,
and child in this country will be well fed, well housed, and well clothed!"
-Feargus O'Connor, stumping in England for the 1838 People's Charter[31]

The transition period to civilian rule delivered the vote as a universal and valuable political resource to squatters all over Brazil. Favelados responded to this change strategically, pooling their voting power to extract goods and protections from the state through clientelistic relationships. Combined with advantageous external conditions – from legitimizing mass social movements to a period of electoral uncertainty and reorganization – slum dwellers were able to forge an advantageous, if ultimately vulnerable, foot-hold in democratic politics.

I. THE TRANSITION TO DEMOCRACY

The dictatorship's 1974 backlash to opposition electoral gains crystallized a nascent social front against continued authoritarian practice. Combining religious and grassroots efforts, industrial unions, middle-class professional groups, and those national bourgeoisie neglected by the military's attention to foreign investment, the opposition expanded beyond the stunted MDB into a mass movement (Alves 2001). Stifling possible conflicts of material interests, the coalition instead focused on winning basic liberal rights and political procedures. The regime rescinded Institutional Act 5 in 1979 to restore *habeas corpus*, the first gubernatorial elections occurred in 1982, and a massive nationwide campaign for direct presidential elections made headlines from 1983 until 1985, when the constitutional amendment allowing popular presidential selection

[31] The People's Charter aimed to grant universal suffrage to all adult males, hold regular elections for England's Parliament, and eliminate the property requirement for candidates of public office. The Charterist movement was possibly the first mass working class movement of an industrial era.

failed in Congress and focus among the elite opposition shifted to winning the presidency through appointment (*Ibid*.).

In 1985, the begrudging appointment of opposition candidate Tancredo Neves by the military-controlled Electoral College marked a peaceful transition to civilian rule. Support for Neves came from a motley coalition including many recent converts to the opposition from the traditional elite, who scrambled to abandon the sinking ship of a dictatorship they had originally helped to birth (Hagopian 1996:221-223). Neve's sudden death catapulted his vice president, the more conservative Joseph Sarney, into the role of chief executive, who oversaw construction of the 1988 Constitution. Direct presidential election did not occur until 1989. By this time, however, the Brazilian traditional elite had already taken the reigns of the democratic bandwagon, leaving their mark on political institutions and processes to follow, and effectively stifling the democratic character of what on the ground was a vibrant civil society movement for substantive change (Hagopian 1996: ch.7).

II. NEW POLITICAL RESOURCES

Voting, Rights, Elections

The most palpable change for citizens in Brazilian politics was the re-introduction of the vote as a relevant political resource. Gubernatorial elections reflected a shift towards the opposition in 1982, when Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo states elected candidates with significant support from the urban underclass (Brizola in Rio and Montoro in São Paulo). With the inclusion of illiterates in 1984, suffrage extended to a much greater share of the population than before the military coup, rising from 18 million in 1960 to over 82 million in 1989 (von Mettenheim

1995:120). It is likely that local mayoral elections of 1985 were the first polls of the new regime to see broad participation in the slums.

To facilitate the potency of the vote, Brazilians were guaranteed a relatively strong range of civil and political rights. The death of Institutional Act 5 ended almost ten years of stringent censorship. Freedom of thought, expression, and press were all enshrined, if somewhat cryptically, in multiple articles of the 1988 Constitution. Furthermore, acts of torture, racism, and human rights violations achieved status as non-bailable crimes, and citizens were granted *habeas data*, or the right to government disclosure of all information being held about them (details from Rosenn 1990).

However, Brazilian electoral politics quickly returned to its trademark reliance on strong personalities and weak/fragmented parties, which most scholars identify as a key barrier to optimum election health (ex: Mainwaring 1992). The 1982 victories triggered an exodus of the old oligarchy from the military coalition to the opposition, throwing local arms of political machines into temporary disarray. Within 6 years, however, alignments were largely reconstructed so that the emperors remained in the new clothes of the PMDB, and local allegiances followed suit. More will be said about this momentarily. While the return to elitist personality politics was an unfortunate one from the squatter perspective, squatters nonetheless held voting power. Thus, slums retained critical leverage over political hopefuls, even those otherwise inclined to favor upper-class interests. Between 1980 and 1990, favelados in Rio grew to a 16.1% share of the city population, while the initially small 5.2% share in 1980 São Paulo exploded to 19.6% by 1993, becoming an significant electoral force.

Excellent work by Scott Mainwaring, Frances Hagopian, and Kurt von Metteheim (among others) through the 1990s shed light on the top-most machinations of the electoral re-

configuration, and the offers of inter-governmental patronage that bade state and local elites to go along. The mechanisms that induced the public to follow have received less attention. In the case of slum dwellers, relatively low resource endowments necessitated relationships of clientelistic vote exchange, a practice more concerned with the depth of a patron's purse than the character holding the strings.

III. NEW TACTICS

While democracy brought suffrage to shantytowns, the marginal benefit of a single ballot among thousands or millions is incredibly small. Acting in isolation in the face of shifting but ultimately elitist electoral forces, the favelado is unlikely to see significant change. Entrepreneurial slum leaders responded strategically to this predicament by utilizing their unique position in the new political terrain, trading influence over pockets of new voters for community handouts from the state.

Clientelism in Brazil: General features in the literature

This type of clientelistic relation has a long history in Brazil, reviving a political tradition with roots in the Old Republic (1889-1930). A highly decentralized era, the landed *coronel* class formed the "glue" holding local constituents to district and state agents by exchanging their votes for access to employment, services, and exemptions from government regulation (Roniger 1990:97). Under Getulio Vargas and the Estado Novo era of democracy (1945-1965), the *coronel* phenomenon was transplanted to the urban setting and institutionalized in the more

explicitly political role of the *cabo eleitoral.*[32] Furthermore, these electoral manifestations of patron-client relations are only the political reflection of a broader social tendency towards clientelism, with origins in the owner-slave and owner-peasant relations of colonial-era agriculture (*Ibid*.: ch.2).

Patron-client relations are often portrayed as reverberations of an outdated peasant mentality, but are in fact highly rational forms of mutually beneficial (if unequal) exchange. Clientelism allows the patron to maintain or increase power while insuring the vulnerable client against risk. Christopher Clapham lists the necessary conditions for clientelistic relations to arise (1982:7-9), all of which apply to the Brazilian case.

> (1) *Critical resources must be controlled by one particular group in society, such that lack of access increases the vulnerability of other sectors.* Startling rates of inequality, compounded by the illegal nature of squatting and the state's exclusive capacity to categorize it as such, meets this criterion.
>
> (2) *Patrons must require the services provided by clients.* Democratically elected patrons require electoral majorities to gain access to public resources.
>
> (3) *The client group must be inhibited from gaining access to resources controlled by patrons, who use co-operative strategies against the empowerment of their clients*. The nature of the controlled democratic transition, which preserved the basic character of political institutions in the interest of traditional elite, prevented popular access to state

[32] Literally the "electoral The *cabo eleitoral* is an iconic figure of Brazilian personalistic politics. More nuanced than simple campaign field staff, the *cabo* acts as the candidate's personal representative, assuring locals that the concerns they share with the *cabo* are heard and attended by the candidate herself.

resources. In the vote trading schemes that followed, patrons were careful to limit the resources given to favelas so as to leave them captive for the next election cycle. Many government programs have brought services to favelas, for example, but without granting full land titles (more will be said on this later).

(4) *A universalist ethic of public allocation must be absent*. This last criterion becomes less applicable over time, thrown into flux by the participatory fervor of the transition and continually eroded through local struggles even after nation-wide mass mobilization ended by 198. However, universalist ethics were entirely lacking in the authoritarian period and would not develop overnight. For example, favelados under the dictatorship did not even understand survey questions that distinguished citizenship rights from duties of subservience to ruling powers (Perlman 1976:188).

Clientelism in Favelas

In the case of state agents and favelados, the classic clientelistic relation is distilled from richer forms of reciprocal moral obligation into simple pre-election exchange. Scott Mainwaring calls this type of relation "neoclientelism" (1995). In it, the favela leader courts political candidates directly and offers her influence over the community's votes. This may include any or all of the following: official endorsement by the favela president/neighborhood association, exclusive rights to post campaign material in the neighborhood, house-to-house presentation of the candidate or candidate's representative under the favela leadership's escort, and the president's pledge to work directly as the candidate's *cabo eleitoral.* In exchange, the politician promises an improvement to the community, which may take a variety of forms. Commonly

promised goods are electric lines, construction of or upgrades to community buildings and recreational areas, toilets, a paved road, water mains, and sewage ditches. The exchange between favela leaders and politicians means that, in practice, the collective power of the community vote is being harnessed to extract goods from the state.

Compared to the suppression of the authoritarian period, this is certainly an improvement! However, several weaknesses and limitations remain. First, such practical attention to handouts obscures the importance of a candidate's larger political program, and it is not unheard of for favelas to endorse politicians whose behavior in office actually hurts the urban poor. Second, clientelism perpetuates the personalistic nature of Brazilian politics and its weak parties, attaching voters to candidates through a hierarchy of distribution rather than nurturing expectations and party platforms of universalistic entitlement. Finally, and most critical, favela clientelism limits the realm of community improvements to one-shot tangible goods, as bargaining for more is inherently risky. Many favela leaders, such as one man profiled in the Robert Gay study, have learned from past experience that stipulating pre-election delivery is necessary to ensure that promised improvements materialize, limiting leaders to requests that fit this transfer schedule (1994:54). Thus, clientelisitc bargaining does not lend itself to abstract demands such as public safety, or more complex and long-term state commitments to education and health.

Leadership and the problem of "Burguêsa Favelada"

The role of favela leadership in clientelisitc relations is a fascinating balancing act of legitimacy. On the one hand, the neighborhood president must convince prospective patrons that she is a valuable intermediary between them and the favela, and that her endorsement will suffice to carry the community's vote *en masse*. On the other, the president's legitimacy as leader

simultaneously depends on her success at extracting state resources. Should the feedback between goods extraction and local influence break down, the leader will lose standing and the favela will lose its collective bargaining power until a new broker is found and/or new links with the state develop.

The arrangement of favela leader as political broker, while allowing for the strategic mobilization of community voting power, also creates an inherent glass ceiling. Other scholars have noted this, in one form or another, as the problem of the "favela bourgeoisie" (Perlman 1976:167 and ch.6; Roniger 1990: 127). It is no longer in the interest of the favela president to challenge government agents, as often happened under the dictatorship through organized protest, nor is it in her interest to obtain too many entitlements for the neighborhood through cooperation. Should spikes in resource allocation significantly compromise the favela's vulnerability, a collective vote broker will lose her function, along with the prestige and respect that comes from an exclusive relationship with political elites. It is not in the interest of the favela president, or the political patron class on whom she depends, for slums to exist in the security afforded to other city residents.

Clientelism & fiscal federalism

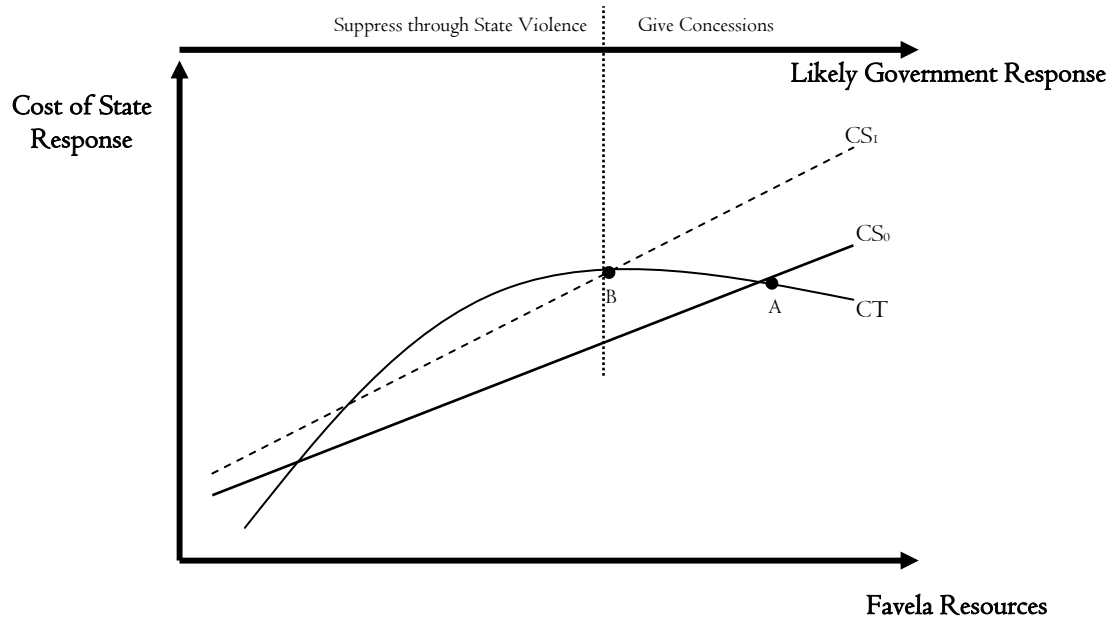
While not at play in the period under scrutiny, politics through the 1980s gave birth to important institutional structures that would enshrine clientelistic practice in the years to come. Scholars normally decry the strong fiscal federalism mandated in the 1988 Constitution for its contribution to persistent government deficits and the challenges posed for austerity programs. Much less has been said about how tax structures fuel local patron-client relations. Since the early 1990's, approximately 60% of the Brazilian federal budget has gone to state and local

levels (Font 2003:211). The original text also protected a bloated public service by creating virtual tenure after 5 years of employment (*Ibid*.:62), and recognized municipal governments as a distinct and equal third tier of government (rather than as "creatures of the states" subject to the parent's discipline). The combination of these three measures created a resource-rich executive and a redundant, secure, and well-paid bureaucracy, none of whom were seriously responsible for the funds under their control. The state of São Paulo alone had 850,000 people on its payroll when protections were handed down, and continues to receive the highest share of government transfers along with other states in the southeastern region (*Ibid*.:38,211). Amendments and revisions of the original 1988 text have alleviated some of the most egregious personnel issues, but transfers remain high. While there are no studies into how the Brazilian tax system affects local patron-client ties, there can be no doubt that elements of the new federalism fed local patron power into the 1990s.

IV. THE MODEL RECONSIDERED

The response of favelados to the introduction of suffrage and attending political rights and practices has implications for the model of state response (Figure 3).

FIGURE 3: Influence of Favela Resources on State Response (Democracy I)



Adding the influence of collective vote barter to the resource function increases the cost of suppression, as every eviction forgoes a prospective constituency. This is reflected in the shift from $CS_0 \rightarrow CS_1$ and the shifting of the turning point from suppression to concessions backwards from A to B. In other words, many favelas previously suppressed under the dictatorship are better off in democracy.

V. EARLY OPPORTUNITIES

Add to the graph a few generalizable trends both inside and outside favelas, and it becomes clear that the immediate years of the transition may have been the slums' best time to extract goods from the state.

First, social capital in neighborhood associations was strong, and again nested in sporadic metropolitan and national coalitions such as the *Movimento de Defesa dos Favelados.* Many large squatter organizations sprang from a progressive revival within the Brazilian Catholic

Church, which through the 1970s established left-leaning community organizations and popular education programs in poor neighborhoods, and supported their co-ordination at city and regional levels after the *abertura* (see Mainwaring 1986:108-110; Levine & Mainwaring 2001).

Second, favela demands benefited from the influential backdrop of a reformist civil society chorus, lending slum dwellers both credibility and a measure of attention from ruling powers. Creating the impression of inevitable change, the favela bargaining position was surely strengthened by an era of mass mobilization. Research by Foweraker and Landman shows social movement activity to be strongest between the years of 1978-1986 (Figure 4). This corresponds to the height of the inter-class opposition activity identified by Alves, culminating in rallies attended by millions in favor of direct presidential elections (2001:292-295). Figure 4 further confirms Alves' assertion that popular protest plummeted soon after Trancredo Neves' appointment and the completion of the Constitution.

FIGURE 4: Strike Rate (SR) and Social Movement Activity (SMA) in Brazil, 1964-1989

Note: Social movement activity is measured as significant incidents of popular mobilization. Data came from extensive review of primary and secondary sources.
Source: Foweraker & Landman 1999:302

Furthermore, while the federal transition to democratic politics was controlled, the civilian oligarchy's flight to the opposition created exploitable moments of local electoral uncertainty.[33] In the example of Minas Gerais, Francis Hagopian finds that local upheaval began in 1982, and from then until 1988 a relatively fresh crop of opposition leaders controlled state-level policy (Hagopian 1996:240). This was echoed by gubernatorial elections in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo states, where challengers (one a political exile during the dictatorship's height) took the reigns of government and pledged to improve state and citizen relations. As traditional elites at the national level reassessed their strategic position and began to abandon ship, ambiguity surrounded local and regional political terrain. This instability, compounded by the impression from mass movements that a new political day was dawning, would have given favelas leverage to extract demands before coalitions and interests could re-congeal in the dependable elitist pattern. Unfortunately this window of electoral opportunity was short lived. Starting in anticipation of the 1986 gubernatorial polls, influentials at the local and regional levels began aligning with the PMDB (or in Rio, the PDT opposition) in anticipation of the over half-million administrative jobs expected to be distributed in the months to follow (von Mettenheim 1995:119). Hagopian reports a constriction of the Minas Gerais political scene after 1988 elections, when 34% of mayoral winners were former ARENA members, with many more tied to traditional political families in the old oligarchy.

[33] In their study of poor people's movements in the United States, Piven and Cloward found the impact of protest and other forms of disruption to be greatest in moments of electoral instability. They conclude that instead of institutionalizing poor-people's dissent in permanent organizations that seek stable roles in ruling coalitions, left-wing strategy should be to broaden and deepen protest while protracting moments of electoral instability for as long as possible. Only in these conditions can maximum concessions be extracted from the state (1977:ch.1).

VI. OUTCOMES IN HOUSING AND SERVICES[34]

Property Laws and Tenure Gains

Popular opposition won several important procedural gains in the transition period. As already stated, full suffrage spread to slum dwellers, and as time wore on, elections became stronger (if still elite biased) mechanisms for popular interest articulation. No less important, however, was the return of the "social function of property" in the 1988 Constitution.

It is prudent not to be overly optimistic about the social function stipulation, as the process of wielding it in slum dwellers' favor remains convoluted. The Constitution further stated that property's social function is met so long as land use conforms to city-drafted urbanization plans (Rosenn 1990:794fn). Brazilian cities were not required by law to compose such plans or submit them to any higher body until the Statute of the City was passed in 2002, after having been pigeon-holed in the Senate for 10 years. As of yet, there is no strong indication that city governments are complying with this legislation, or if the new draft plans are incorporating beneficial slum programs (personal communication with Sebastian Tedeschi, Center on Housing Rights and Evictions in Porto Alegre Brazil, 11/2/06). However, the social function clause still created a new legal door for legislation and programs to bring security of tenure to sizable portions of Brazilian squatters.

It is still rare in practice for favelados to have full functioning land titles that can be sold or borrowed against.[35] However, large and well-coordinated favelas earned *de facto* security as

[34] I have separated this and the following chapter not only by periods in the democratic timeline, but by positive and negative outcomes for favelados. In reality, the positive forces of this period's model bleed into and still hold for many favelas after 1988. Similarly, the pernicious forces at work in the following period (which are modeled in the next chapter) may have already begun in some favelas in the transition, so that improvements and new problems can be seen in favelas at any point in time. This is particularly true of carioca favelas. For the purpose of clarity I group the positive outcomes for slums in democracy with the positive model in this chapter (and do the opposite for negatives), but the reader should understand this is more to identify a general clustering of forces and outcome around a specified locus in time, not to delineate a strict turning point.

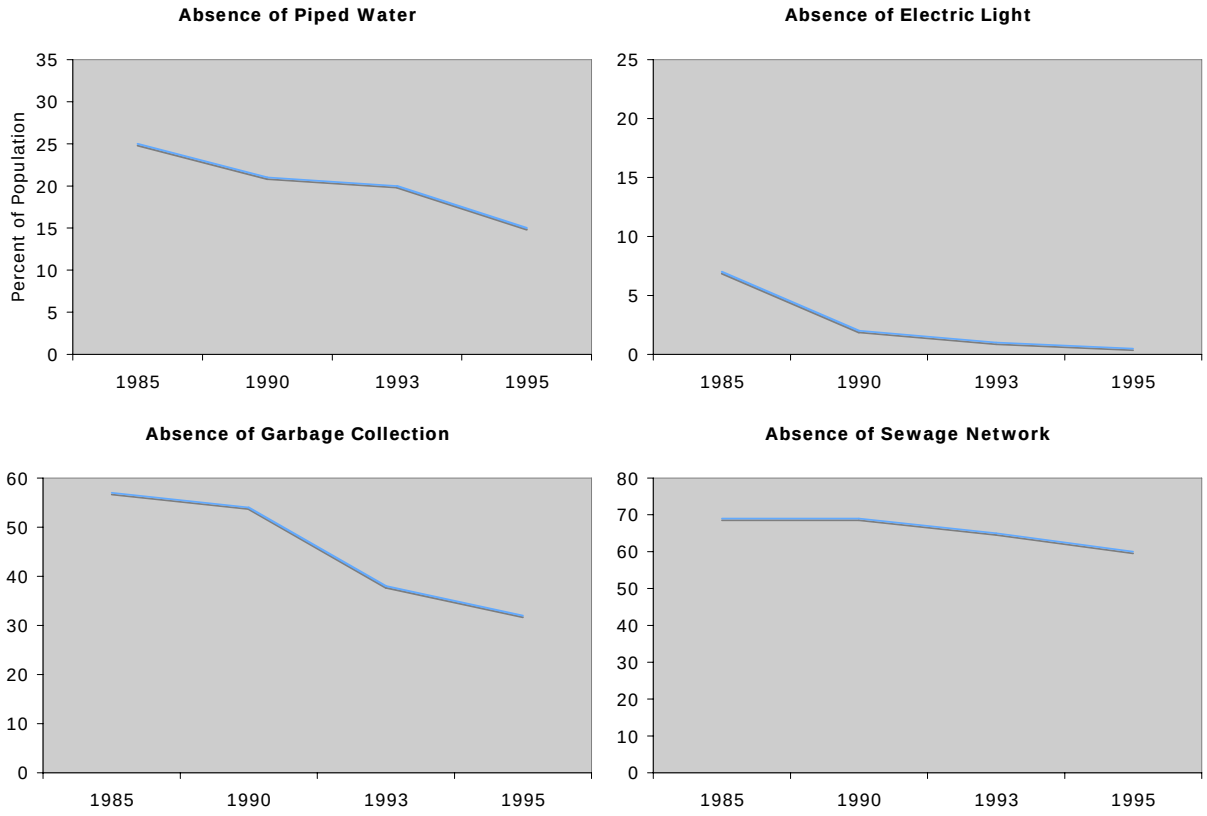
slum dwellers transformed into voters. Furthermore, programs designed to regularize shantytowns through provisional titles and communal rights have steadily catered to slum constituents through the 1990s, even as favelado political power deteriorated under drug gangs. Federal Housing Policy passed in 1995 articulated, though did not mandate, goals to regularize urban slums and promote land access. Some states have followed suit voluntarily. Rio Grande do Sul has made impressive gains, though their innovations have not spread to other states (COHRE 2003:17). Similarly, the *Favela-Bairro* program in metropolitan Rio de Janeiro has regularized and granted provisional titles to an estimated 250,000 squatters (IADB 2005). While this is significant improvement, there are still over a million squatters in the city as of 2000. Furthermore, *Favela-Bairro* lacks programs to deal with police and community violence, some of the most pressing quality-of-life issues in carioca slums.

Public Services

With the exception of sewage disposal systems, favelas made significant gains in public services where needed. Figure 5 presents data on improvements from 1985-1995 for Rio de Janeiro's poorest income decile. While income composition in favelas clusters around the bottom few deciles, and not just the lowest, this decile is best to illustrate the magnitude of gains.

[35] Semi-formal and informal housing markets are vibrant, with neighbors and favela leadership acting as legitimating witnesses of sales.

FIGURE 5: Absence of Public Services Among the Lowest Income Decile in Rio de Janeiro 1985-1995



Source: derived from World Bank 2001:58

Qualitative observations made by researchers familiar with slums further confirm this trend (comments in Perlman 2006; Leeds 1998). Electricity is now ubiquitous in carioca favelas, in part the result of early privatization of the service and business entrepreneurship to tap the nascent consumption base. Water mains are much more common, with favelados building intricate roof-top tanks and piping systems to bring water inside. Incidence of major appliance ownership is up, so that radios, televisions, and refrigerators are now operating in the vast majority of shantytown homes, with washers and VCRs in many more. Because Rio de Janeiro's favelas are generally older than slums in other cities, they show higher rates of improvement.

Most attribute this to a combination of government provision and local ingenuity and investment over time.

Of course, problems in housing adequacy and service provision are hardly a thing of the past (see Table 4). The Center for Housing Rights and Evictions has published the following data on remaining inadequacies in Brazilian access to housing. Furthermore, a full 83.2% of Brazilians experiencing these deficits are of the lowest income bracket (earning under 3 times Brazil's minimum monthly salary rate).

TABLE 4: Estimated Inadequacy in Durable Urban Residences by Number of Persons

Excessive Density	Urban Land Inadequacy	Lack of infrastructure	Lack of Sanitation	Inadequacy by depreciation
2,024,939	1,508,744	10,261,076	1,466,701	836,669

Source: COHRE 2003:11

Furthermore, the category of census data upon which these calculations are made does not include improvised housing. So while significant material gains have accrued to favelas since democratization, improvements have not been universal or sufficient to meet outstanding basic needs.

CHAPTER 5: DEMOCRATIC BARGAINING (1988-PRESENT)
or THE BAD NEWS

Brazil is no longer an underdeveloped country. It is an unjust country.
-Fernando Henrique Cardoso, 1994

Just as the benefits of collective vote barter began to accrue for favelas, a perfect storm of factors rose to deteriorate their new-found foothold in democratic politics. This chapter will demonstrate how drug trafficking and violent crime have simultaneously eroded slum social capital while raising the favela's threat profile in the view of other city residents. Combined with external demobilization of mass social movements and the congealing of local power structures, favelados are now equally, if not more likely, to face suppression by a democratic government as they were under the authoritarian regime. While democratic parameters have changed the nature of state violence, the effects on favelados are no less pernicious. Slum communities continue to be marked by a precarious state of survival.

I. DRUG TRAFFICKING & VIOLENT CRIME

Brazil functions in the global cocaine trade to link Spanish-speaking producer countries in the Andean region with a lusophone distribution network that carries narcotics through Africa into Europe (BBCBrasil.com 10/7/06). As this role developed through the 1980s and 90s, Brazilian coastal cities grew into hubs of trafficking activity. Because of their low level of state penetration, chaotic and cramped terrain, and the tradition of mistrust for police forces, favelas became the ideal home base for drug gangs (Leeds 1996).

As it did in the inner cities of the United States, cocaine introduced a new level of violence into impoverished Brazilian communities. In contrast to the lower profit margins gained from old standbys like marijuana, the high payoffs associated with this new drug both

necessitated and made possible greater investments in arms to protect traffickers' goods while escalating competition over control of the lucrative business. As elements of Brazilian police forces found the payoffs of getting involved too great to refuse, their incentive to end the violence associated with the trade fell.

As a result, violent crime in Brazil's Southeastern cities has skyrocketed. Holston and Caldeira find that in São Paulo, violent offenses have jumped to obtain at least a 30% share of all criminal acts in the 1990s, up from 20% at the beginning of the 1980s. The murder rate alone spiked from 14.7 per 100,000 residents to between 33.9 and 37.2 in the same amount of time (1998:268). This pattern has only marginally changed since the early 1990s. For example, homicide rates in Rio de Janeiro city and state have held steady between 1998 and 2005. "An average of 6,336 homicides took place in the state each year, a rate of 43.5 deaths per 100,000. This figure rises to 57.3 in the Baixada Fluminense, the agglomeration of poor municipalities outside the state capital and a long term focus of extreme poverty and 'death-squad' activity" (Amnesty 2007:17).

Janice Perlman revisted her dictatorship-era study of Rio favelas from 1999-2005 and provides some of the best localized data on the favelado experience of violence. When asked if they or a family member had been a victim of various crimes, 56% of favelados responded yes to robbery, 46% to mugging, and a startling 20% to murder (Perlman 2006:172).

Changes inside the Favela

There is a budding body of literature into how the drug trade is eroding and manipulating favela social capital, particularly in the port city of Rio de Janeiro. Reviewing the research thus far reveals three ways drug gangs and their battles with police cripple local communities. First,

the high levels of violence that follow the drug trade strain social ties between residents, who react to the culture of fear by staying indoors and withdrawing their families from community activities. Second, drug lords tend to chase off neighborhood association leadership to strengthen control over their terrain in the face of rival gangs. Finally, where neighborhood association is not incapacitated, traffickers tend to exploit the president's role as vote broker to graft off the already light flow of resources entering slums via patron-client exchange. These three phenomena tend to operate in concert, but may also appear in isolation.

A principle finding of Janice Perlman's return study was the loss of social ties among favelados, who have become afraid to leave their homes lest they be caught in the crossfire of police and drug gangs. Compared to 1969, when over half of respondents said their community was "very unified" and 24% felt it was "somewhat united," virtually no one today sees strong unity and 55% say it is absent (Perlman 2006:174). Similarly, membership in voluntary organizations has gone down. While 68% of respondents in 1969 were members of community groups, a 2001 study of shantytown dwellers in both Rio and Aracaju of Northeastern Brazil found that 72% of residents were in no organizations at all (Happ & König 2003:94). Finally, membership in neighborhood associations in particular dropped from a high of 31% among Perlman's original sample to 6% among the following generation (2006:174).

Traffickers' most blatant act of favela leadership removal is assassination. In the late 1980s, Rio de Janeiro police recoded the deaths of no less than 240 favela leaders, while researchers in the area have noted presidents' deaths after challenging drug lords (Barcello 2003:234 in Arias 2006a:431). Less extreme is the practice of running presidents out of their communities, or traffickers strong-arming their way into the association structure.

Finally, Enrique Arias has done extensive ethnographic work in Rio favelas and reveals how organized crime may use neighborhood presidents to redirect electoral patronage for traffickers' personal benefit. In what he calls "double barreled clientelism," drug lords dictate to presidents which patrons they will endorse and on what terms, backing their demands with the threat of force (Arias 2006b). For example, in the 1998 elections, the president of favela Tuberão (not its real name) made a deal with state assembly candidates to employ 50 favela residents as beach-combing handbill distributers. The construction of a community dance floor was also part of the agreement, in exchange for exclusive rights to post campaign material in the slum. Just days before the election, however, traffickers brokered their own deal with a second candidate for an undisclosed price, and forced the president to take down the first set of signs. Members of the cartel promptly commandeered the dance floor and used it to throw parties for themselves and select residents (Arias 2006a:436-438). Arias also notes evidence that traffickers endorse candidates with lax stances on fighting the drug trade (*Ibid*.:441)

The interference of drug gangs in clientelistic relations further weakens an already fragile mechanism of resource extraction. While it is true that vote barter between political candidates and neighborhood presidents created incentives for both parties to restrict the scope of goods awarded to the community, the accountability of the president still ensured that gifts were communal in nature. Whether through direct election or slowly eroding popular support, a president could always be deposed for not "bringing home the bacon." In contrast, a local trafficker's position of influence depends primarily on force and resident submission rather than popularity. This affords drug lords the opportunity to redirect political patronage for their own particularistic needs, only sharing with residents when it serves the purpose of tightening their hold on the community. Furthermore, the entrance of drug gangs into clientelistic practice

imbeds criminal violence in the political process, and erodes residents' confidence in democratic politics in general (Arias 2006a:435). It is not surprising that 63% of urban shantytown dwellers surveyed by Happ and König felt politicians did not care about what they thought; 87% were resigned to the idea that "a few strong leaders can make a country better than all the laws and talk" (2003: 143,128).

Changes outside the Favela

The rise of the drug trade and violent crime in Brazil's urban slums has simultaneously served to raise their threat profile among other city residents and build popular support for state-endorsed violent reprisal. In the state of Rio, formerly exiled Leonel Brizola was elected governor in 1982 and served through 1987 at the height of popular democratic mass mobilization. He tried to improve police-community relations by prohibiting "blitz-type" attacks on slums and rampant arbitrary arrests of favelados, but faced challenges from middle and upper class constituents by the end of his term for "stimulating the drug trade by tying the hands of police" (Leeds 1996:67). In São Paulo, after the country's worst prison massacre claimed the lives of 111 poor inmates and sparked international condemnation, a startling 22-44% of locals surveyed sided with the policemen-killers (Amnesty 2007 and Leeds 1996:272).

Two additional changes in the city environment also contribute to the crumbling bargaining position of slum dwellers. First, the era of mass social movements ended after the 1988 Constitution was promulgated (see Figure 4 in the previous chapter). As a result, demands made by favelados through city, regional, and national networks would have lost their legitimizing entourage of active and like-minded organizations. Furthermore, a conservative backlash within the Catholic Church caused its recession from progressive and radical politics

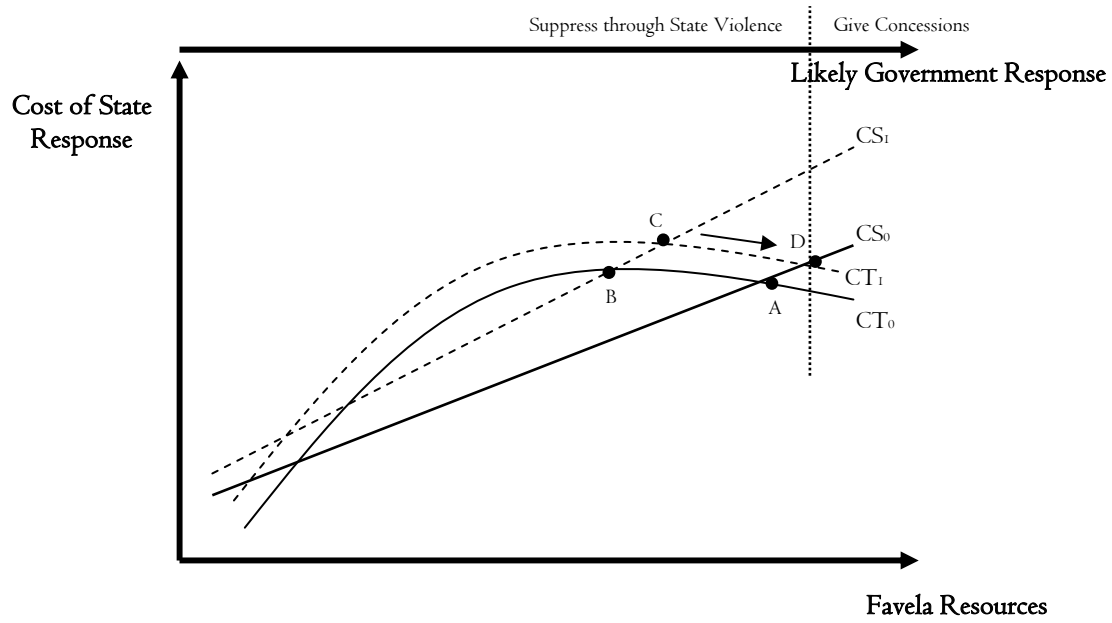
through the mid 1980s (Mainwaring 1986:ch11). With its departure, base communities in slum areas lost a primary instigator of political action and a key coordinator of city and regional favela networks.

Finally, the passing of the transition period's electoral ambiguity and the congealing of local political interest camps served to close favelados' "window of opportunity." In Minas Gerais, for example, Francis Hagopian found that traditional elites constricted electoral possibilities by 1988 through the reconstruction of their former patronage machines. In that year, several mayoral winners were either former ARENA members or descendants of pre-authoritarian politicians from the landed oligarchy, reversing a budding trend towards fresh opposition candidates (Hagopian 1996:240-241). It is likely that a similar process occurred in many states in Brazil as elites abandoned the ranks of government parties and perched atop opposition movements in the PMDB. At the local level, this sea-change would have been mirrored in constituency shifts that left politicians to bargain with favelas in a state of higher ambiguity. However, as the dust settled by the 1990s, candidates could more effectively tally their foes, allies, and likely supporters coming into any election cycle, leaving less electoral-anxiety for favlea brokers to exploit.

II. MODELING THE CHANGE

These trends can be distilled and represented by shifts in the original model of favela-state relations to produce Figure 6:

FIGURE 6: Influence of Favela Resources on State Response (Democracy 2)



The rise of drug trafficking and crime in the 1980s-90s cause two concurrent shifts in Figure 6. As noted, favelas became increasingly threatening to other city residents, who put pressure on government officials to act and stood by as their suppression became violent. This is reflected in the shift from the first "Cost of Tolerance" curve to the second, or $CT_0 \rightarrow CT_1$, shifting the tolerance-to-suppression turning point from B →C.

At the same time, drug trafficking erodes the social capital of favela communities, who become unable to barter their votes collectively through strong neighborhood associations. The deterioration of the vote variable causes the "Cost of Suppression" line CS_1 to rotate back towards its original position. This causes a subsequent slide of turning-point C towards D (worst-case scenario) along line CT_1.

Conceptually, the changes in the model show that favelas may be just as likely to experience state violence under democratic conditions, if not more so. To investigate whether this is in fact the case, we must examine data and evidence of government suppression, as well as elements of democratic practice that shape the form that such violence takes.

III. OUTCOMES

Data on police practices show that state suppression is in fact on the rise. An explosion in the numbers of citizen deaths at the hands of police, rising body counts of semi-official death squads, and the increasingly militarized and indiscriminant tactics used against entire favela communities complete the picture predicted by the model.

Killings by Police

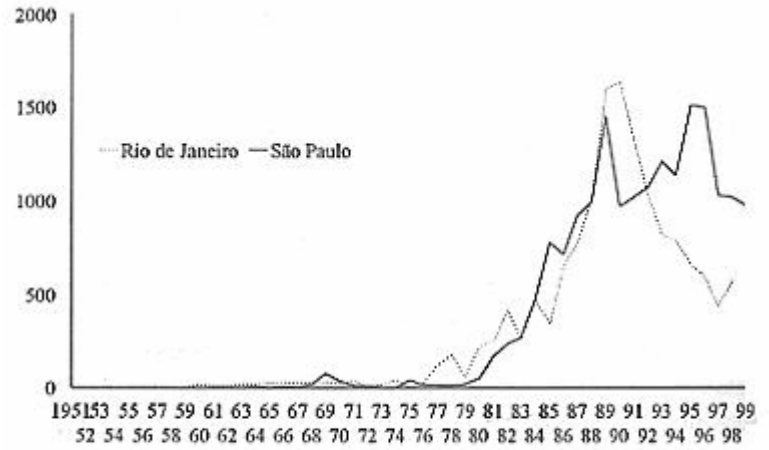
Not only has the number of violent deaths gone up in Brazilian cities, but the share attributable to on-duty police officers has also risen. Holston & Caldeira have compiled a list of useful illustrations from São Paulo (1995:268-271). Between 1986 and 1990, police were responsible for one in ten of all murders in the city. This figure rose to 15.8% in 1991 and an astounding 27.4% in 1992. That means that in 1992, police killed 1,470 civilians in confrontations, compared to the 27 killed by New York police and 23 in Los Angeles in the same year (Chevigny 1995:46,67 in Holston & Cladeira 1998:271). This could be construed as a proportionate response to rising drug crime if police deaths were also growing, but these consistently average around 39 deaths annually. Furthermore, the ratios of suspects killed to those wounded show that Brazilian police are trained to murder criminals rather than bring them to justice. In the U.S., an average of two to three civilians were wounded in police pursuit for every one killed through the 1980s and 90s, while in São Paulo, 2 deaths were reported for every person injured in the 1980s, 3.6 in 1991, and 4.6 in 1992 (*Ibid*.).

Killings by Death Squads

Violence is also exacted on poor urban civilians through the activities of official and semi-official death squads. Brazilian death squads originate from a practice initiated in 1957, when the federal chief of the military police began an elite force in Rio de Janeiro tasked with assassinating city delinquents (Rose 2005:233-234). After the death of a beloved commander in the force, police took it upon themselves to form vengeful, crime exterminating fraternities that have since spread to other cities, going by names like the Twelve Men of Gold, the Squadron of Death, and the Gang of the Skull. While battling some notorious criminals, it is also common for these groups to murder simple beggars and become involved in a range of illicit and highly profitable activities, blurring the line between cop and criminal.

R.S. Rose lead a team of researchers through an exhaustive search of media dailies to construct a data set of likely death squad victims (Rose 2005:ch.6). His findings show that death squad assassinations have risen along with the spread of drug trafficking and political liberalization in both São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, totaling an astounding 32,630 murders in the two states since 1951 (Figure 7, following page).

FIGURE 7: Suspected Death Squad Victims by Number and Year
in the States of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo



	Rio de Janeiro	*São Paulo*	*Total*
Females	783	632	*1415*
Males	13955	17260	*31215*
Total	*14738*	*17892*	32630

Source: R.S. Rose 1995:272

Furthermore, victims are almost entirely poor and lower class, accounting for 97.2% of all killed in Rio and 98.9% of deaths in São Paulo. Rose found that the top 3 reasons squads targeted victims ranged from suspected involvement in narcotics, to assault and robbery, to status as a family member or witnesses of a previous victim (2005:285).

It must also be stressed that the state is complicit and even supportive of these practices, spurred on by permissive public attitudes. The new Constitution installed the special military courts to try military police, even for their many civil functions. These consistently rule in favor of dubious practices (Holston & Calderia 1998:269). Impunity for even the most serious massacres is widespread, investigations into abuses of power are frequently never completed, and the 1995 introduction of “bravery pay” for success in heavily armed operations all contribute

to the legitimization and perpetuation of abusive forms of state violence (Human Rights Watch 1997).

Tactics in and against Favelas

Tactics in favelas have increasingly taken the form of arbitrary and militaristic policing, which at its height manifests as blitz-style assaults on entire communities. Elizabeth Leeds lists the various practices included in these raids as "knocking down resident's doors, arresting residents for vagrancy who happen to be without identity cards when stopped, flying helicopters so low that roofs are blown off, indiscriminately firing weapons, and extorting cash and drugs from residents under the threat of arrest" (Leeds 1996:64). Literature on police violence is peppered with these incidents, which in Rio alone include the 1993 killings of street children in Candelária and a raid on favela Vigáro Geral, 1994's Operation Rio and assault on favela Nova Brasília, 2005's raids on favelas Acarí and Vila dos Pinheiros, and city-wide standoffs resulting in hundreds of deaths in both Rio and São Paulo in 2006.

Amnesty International's 2005 report on police tactics in Rio and São Paulo illustrate the increasingly militaristic and disproportionate nature of community raids. Police forces in both states have purchased numberous tank-like vehicles that are popularly known as *caveirão* ("big skull"). One 8 ton *caveirão* carries 12 policemen, is equipped with two layers of armor capable of withstanding explosives and heavy arms, a rotating gun turret, firing positions along the sides, and a loudspeaker to make announcements. Reports of standard announcements range from "Children, get out of the street, there is going to be a shootout," to derogatory remarks about favela women, to "We have come to take your souls." In one of the most disturbing uses of the *caveirão*, a 17 year old boy was shot and his body draped over the vehicle's front hook. Police

proceeded to drive the tank around the community and demand money for the body's return (Amnesty 2006:5). Many studies that discuss favela raids emphasize the high numbers of innocents, including children and the elderly, who have been killed while police are ostensibly fighting drug traffickers.

Again, there is strong evidence that abusive policing comes at the behest of public pressures. While the topic had been on the table several months prior, PSDB executives at the state and national levels agreed to send in the military to occupy several favelas immediately before November's gubernatorial and presidential elections. Initially opposed by the PDT as an infringement on human rights, the PSDB governor's candidate used the issue to portray its opponent as weak on crime and went on to win the election (all details from Leeds 1996:75-76).

IV. EXPLAINING THE CHANGING PATTERN OF STATE VIOLENCE

The outcomes listed above demonstrate that suppression of favela communities is alive and well in Brazilian democracy, even as its nature has changed from authoritarian practice. To understand the causes of this shift, specific elements of Brazilian democracy as it relates to urban slums must be explained. The very procedural gains favelados made in the transition period, compounded by minor government programs earned in response to their use, pattern the shift from city-wide eviction policy to localized but exceedingly violent policing.

The combination of tenure gains and the expansion of voting power to favelas made large-scale eviction policy difficult to rationalize in the minds of state agents. Every community expelled would mean not only a loss of votes for a candidate, but the assurance that they will accrue to competitor in the next election, assuming that those expelled settle elsewhere in the city. Other favelas would see evictions and change their candidate support accordingly.

Furthermore, those communities able to secure tenure through the "social function of property" law and government regularization programs detailed in the previous chapter could challenge and block eviction in court.

As the first iteration of the favela resource model showed, this would have been enough to avoid state suppression if the drug trade had not simultaneously increased the threat profile and decreased the social capital endowment of slum communities. With city constituents pushing state tactics back to violence, state agents are pressed to select specific communities as targets for reprisal.

Of course, the unique features of criminal activity surrounding the drug trade help explain new patterns of state violence, specifically large arms investments by traffickers and the co-option of entire communities for their purposes. However, one cannot argue that these factors are independent of political structures. First is evidence from Holston and Caldeira that killings by police in São Paulo have grown even as police deaths have stagnated, suggesting that the government's tactics are to blame for new losses of life, not an overall escalation of trafficker's violent activity. Second, the weaknesses inherent in clientelistic relationships linking slums to the state made it impossible for favelados to turn voting power into protection from rising criminals tides. Recall that vote bartering in the transition was inherently limited to concessions of tangible goods deliverable before election day. In these circumstances, *it would be nearly impossible to broker for "community safety" in extended and programmatic state commitments*, so that the onset of a problem like drug trafficking in favelas would be ignored until it threatened other resource-rich constituents. In other words, because the vote was so weak a political resource to begin with, it failed to protect slum residents when they needed it most. [36]

[36] Current scholarship on Latin America's un-rule of law tends to focus on large institutional structures and interactions, legacies of history, funding scarcity, and individual rational choice to explain persistent corruption. In

While favelados themselves do not construct complex models to describe why the democratic process has failed them, they are acutely cognizant that it is happening. **79%** of Perlman's original interviewees said the dictatorship's end had no significant impact on their lives, **69%** felt that meaningful political participation had declined or stayed the same, and **81%** said their bargaining power had stagnated or diminished in the same period of time (Perlman forthcoming:6-7).

turn, this corruption leads to impunity, random application of justice, and excessive levels of violence in Latin American countries. My analysis suggests that lack of political power in poor neighborhoods, an inherent problem of liberal democracy, also plays a critical role.

CONCLUSION & IMPLICATIONS

> *"Yet when all this and more has been said about the limits and contingent character of civic and political liberties under 'bourgeois democracy'… it remains the case that many have constituted an important and valuable element of life in capitalist societies; and that they have materially affected the encounter between the state and the citizen, and between the dominant classes and the subordinate ones. The point of the socialist critique of 'bourgeois freedoms' is not (or should not be) that they are of no consequence, but that they are profoundly inadequate, and need to be extended by the radical transformation of the context, economic, social and political, which condemns them to inadequacy and erosion."*
>
> -Ralph Milliband, *The State in Capitalist Society*

I. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

What actually changed in the Brazilian democratic transition? A few minor details of procedure, but a similar balance of outcomes persisted. Political bargaining in conditions of highly unequal resource distribution continued. Universal suffrage and the return of basic citizen protections brought limited material gains, but failed to give slums the political voice necessary to protect themselves from rising criminal tides. The state retained control over the use of force and remained similarly inclined to use it, only being molded at the edges of its application by the legal guarantees and slim clientelistic links afforded to slum dwellers. Resource-wealthy citizens find protection from the state as always, yesterday through eradication policies and today in militarized full-on assaults of select poor communities.

Brazilian democracy has failed to make significant net gains in the lives of urban underprivileged citizens because it has failed to radically alter pre-existing relations of social and political power.[37] Ralph Milliband makes a similar point in his analysis of competition between business and worker interests in the capitalist democratic state, noting that, "after all David did

[37] This analysis differs from modern power studies that, like Iris Marion Young, move too far away from a focus on resource distribution. While I agree with Young that power is inherently a relation, and that it consists in a range of factors beyond resources held, lessons drawn from Brazilian favelas indicate that the influence of resources continue to weigh heavily on possible outcomes.

overcome Goliath. But the point of the story is that David *was* smaller than Goliath and that the odds *were* heavily against him" (1969:165).

As this thesis shows, the initial dearth of political resources under authoritarian bargaining conditions ensured that urban slums were either neglected or violently evicted by state forces. Despite favela efforts of resistance and ingratiation, powerful interests usually prevailed. Slum leadership was often imprisoned and mistreated, or enlisted into the project of community suppression.

The expansion of suffrage, the improvement of electoral systems, and attending political rights, liberties, and protections were important gains for urban squatters. But they were simply not enough. In a relatively barren environment, the reintroduction of suffrage caused the "clumping" of voting power around particularistic patron-client modes of exchange; collective vote barter is a strategy of the politically resource-poor, whose vote alone is so negligible that it must be pooled with its neighbors to make a difference (in contrast to resource-wealthy citizens who rely on additional assets to influence politics). Clientelistic practice brought important material gains for many slums- greater levels of public services and a degree of tenure security- but remained both inherently limited in its ability to extract public goods, and susceptible to forces that would cripple the social ties necessary to collectively mobilize votes. The rise of drug trafficking and organized crime in favelas presented just such a threat, which procedural democratic gains proved incapable of fending off.

In this way, even as democracy "empowered" favelados to partake in electing state executives, and thereby theoretically attain greater control over public decisions affecting their lives, they remained dependant on the handouts of others (politicians and traffickers) for their precarious survival. In short, the Brazilian experience shows that choosers *can* be beggars.

II. COMMENTS ON LOOSE ENDS

The findings of this thesis remain contentious at the macro-level. It is one thing to claim that Brazilian electoral systems and liberal citizenship rights have not improved the quality of life for many underprivileged Brazilians. It is quite another to assert that they cannot and will not, or to hint that this holds for all liberal democracies, in all cases, for all people. While the scope of this thesis is deliberately local, and full exploration of the limits of liberal democratic systems lies beyond it, a short discussion on the point is prudent.

We will remain with Brazil for the sake of argument. If so many Brazilians are poor, liberal democratic theory predicts that incentives therein will trigger the entry of new left wing candidates into electoral contest. At the least, it should induce preemptive policy concessions by traditional elites. As long as it is working properly, shouldn't the competitive nature of elections lead to improved outcomes for the ruled? A quick survey of Brazil's results gives an answer: Better candidates, yes. More social spending, yes. Significantly improved outcomes, no.

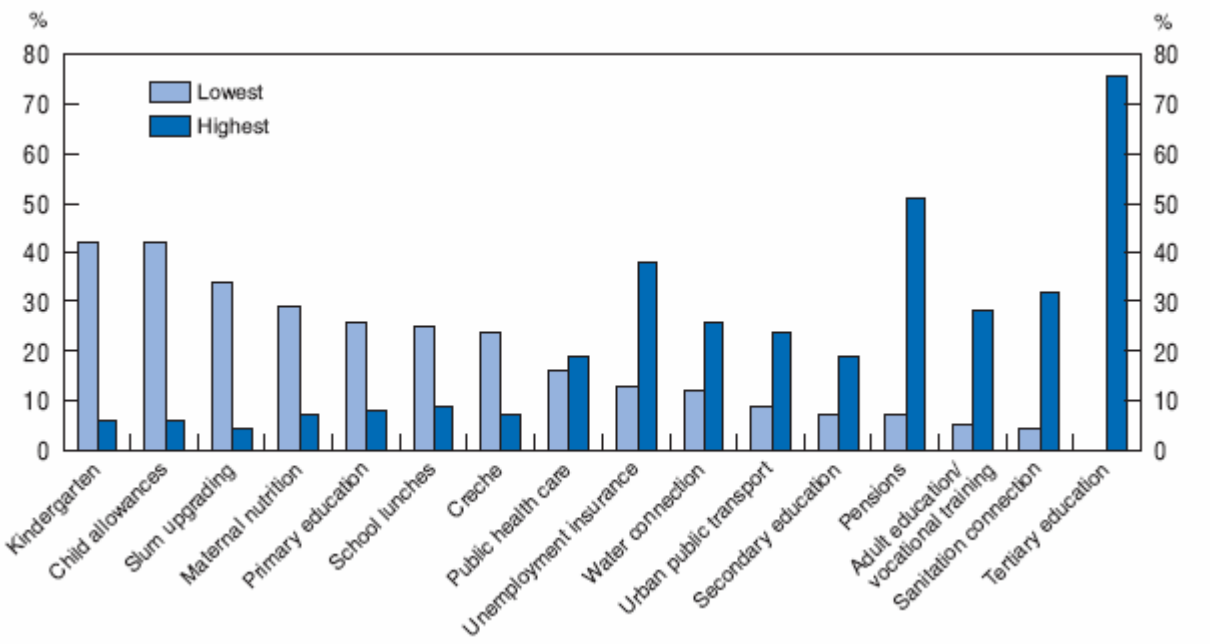
On the subject of new electoral competitors, the ascent of the Worker's Party (PT) in the 1990s signaled to many a new day in Brazilian politics. In contrast to personality driven patronage machines of traditional elites, the PT seemed dedicated to first-principles and real platform development, as well as preserving the autonomy and strength of the grass-roots movements from which they drew their support. The 2002 presidential victory of PT socialist Luiz Inácio "Lula" da Silva seemed to signal Brazil's long awaited break from an elite-dominated past. However, disappointment at Lula's follow-through on campaign trail rhetoric is spreading, and a corruption scandal in his cabinet that culminated in winter 2005 proved that the party has not been able to avoid some classic bad habits of Brazilian politics. This is only one

case in a long line of historical examples of how socialist and other left-wing parties consistently become more conservative in government office (see Miliband 1969: 96-118).

Whether by the direct action of the Worker's Party, or indirectly through leftist pressures on conservative officials, social spending is high in Brazil. In 2001, following years of similar expenditure, a full 24.4% of national GDP went to social programs (OECD 2005:125). With these rates, it is astounding that so many Brazilians remain underprivileged on so many indicators, (recall the persistently high Gini, and the difference in human development and life span between carioca neighborhoods discussed in chapter 2). Something is terribly wrong here, considering that the World Bank estimated in 1995 that perfectly targeted income transfers could eliminate poverty for a mere 0.8% of Brazil's GDP. Even foregoing targeting difficulties altogether, it would take only 12% of the GDP to guarantee all citizens a yearly wage above the poverty line (World Bank 1995:18).

The dissonance between spending and outcomes lies in middle class capture, true to Michael Ross' predictions (2004). Of the 24.4% share spent on social programs, 20.8% of GDP goes to the three most biased sectors: pensions, healthcare, and education (OECD 2005:125). Figure 8 illustrates instances of pro- and anti-poor bias by area of social spending:

FIGURE 8: Percent Government Spending Accruing to the Lowest and Highest Income Quintiles for Select Public Programs



Source: OECD 2005:132

Moreover, the same study indicates that only 26.8% of Brazil's bottom income quintile receive public income transfers, compared to 41.2% of the middle and upper classes (*Ibid.*:133).

It is clear that whatever gains liberal democracy promises favelados in theory, they are not receiving in practice. Moreover, high levels of poorly targeted social spending further deteriorate their bargaining position. As "moral concessions" to the popular classes rather than substantive ones, government assistance programs make it even more difficult to construct convincing political arguments in favelados' favor. Lacking specific knowledge of true recipients, social spending placates the sympathetic tendencies of the upper classes while lining their pockets. Conservative politicians can exploit public ignorance of distribution to argue that enough is being done.

III. IMPLICATIONS FOR BRAZIL AND LARGER DEMOCRATIC PRACTICE

I conclude that liberal democratic practices in Brazil have not been sufficient, and will not be sufficient, to reverse this trend. The trend continues, in part, because the relationships that integrate urban slums into democracy remain asymmetric and vulnerable. In turn, this vulnerability is attributable to the meager differences that liberal democratic resources actually make in political bargaining, especially when added to otherwise resource-poor lives. State suppression of urban slums and middle-class capture of concessions persists in Brazil because democracy does not adequately empower the poor to challenge it.

By extension, I suggest that this inherent weakness in democratic practice can help explain the persistent deprivation of various social groups in democracies the world over, particularly in instances of highly unequal resource distribution (political and otherwise). Continually depressed indicators of life quality among African and Native Americans- citizens in the world's oldest democracy- are only one example of the many cases that could benefit from explanatory scholarship launched from a similarly skeptical perspective of democratic politics.

Finally, this thesis implies that to see improvements for Brazilians slums (and the underprivileged in general), we must construct a new model of democratic practice. This model will need to surpass radically the ordering principles for political bargaining that liberal democracies rely upon, and focus on the re-distribution and strengthened regulation of political resources if substantive change is to occur. In the example of Brazilian squatters, new institutions, systems of representation, and a radical expansion of citizenship rights are all possible solutions to the urgent call. While I do not attempt to build the alternative to liberal democracy here, its formulation is necessary and pressing.

Ultimately, the assertion that voting and modern liberal rights are not sufficient to solve most problems of the underprivileged citizen is not controversial, at least within the left. A slightly smaller audience appreciates that these protections may not suffice to avert the bluntest forms of state violence. However, I have tried to make this case beyond the confines of theory by drawing attention to the suffering of a distinct and immediate group of people, which I believe to be worthwhile in its own right.

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